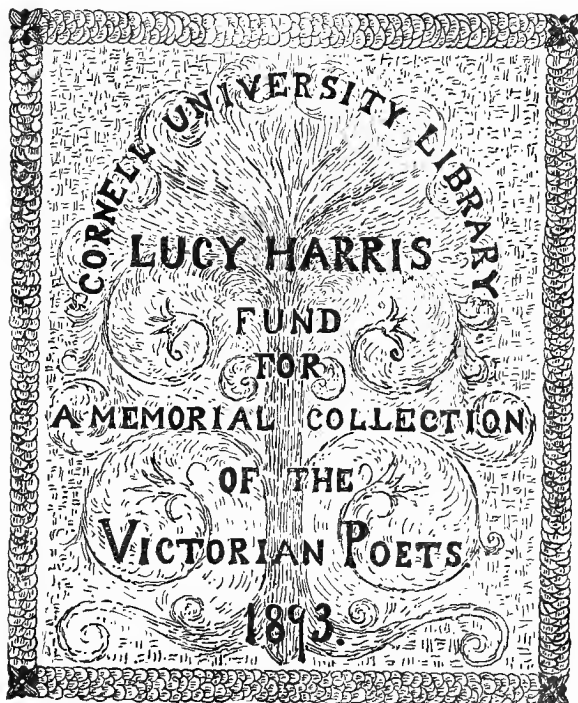


ZALMOXIS

AND OTHER POEMS





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ZALMOXIS

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

JAMES H. WILSON.

LONDON :

ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1892.

A.129691

TO
ROBERT SPENCE WATSON, LL.D.,
AND
ELIZABETH SPENCE WATSON,

*to whose encouragement to work (most given when
most needed) I owe so much, this volume is with
much gratitude and affection inscribed.*

J. H. W.

March 1st, 1892.

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MOONLIGHT.

Above those hills and toward that stream
Whose waters murmur soft and low,
Lost in a long unwaking dream
Alone with falling steps I go.

Mysterious voices whisper nigh,
And fill my soul with joy divine.
“Thine is the world of dreams” they cry,
“And youth and song and love are thine.”

But if I cry: “O ever stay,
Companions of a lonely heart!”
The shadows darkly pass away;
The voices cease; the forms depart.

The glory of that dream is o'er.

I follow with beseeching eyes,
To where lamenting evermore
The river dark and bridgeless lies.

The moaning night wind calls around.

I wake. Far off the woods are still—
The shadows in soft slumber drowned—
The moonlight dreaming on the hill.

The moonlight falls in beauty there,

Where all is beautiful and blest,
And seems to fade on wings of air,
Beneath the window of thy rest.

And then I know my weak song hath

Thrilled thine own dreams with rapture deep,
Discovering some melodious path
Of entrance through the gates of sleep.

ZALMOXIS.

TIME—500 B.C.

SCENE—The country now called Roumania.

The Thracians worship Zalmoxis, a runaway slave from Samos.

LUCIAN, (*scornfully*).

What of that? a slave? I know it; slave am I,
and slave was he.

You're from Athens, and a poet? Are songs only
for the free?

Why, I guessed you in a second, though my years
are near fourscore;
Poets—fools—I've always reckoned; noisy boasters,
nothing more.

Poets—full of wails and whimpers—doleful loves
and misty dreams—
Courting praise with girlish simpers—pouring odes
in floods and streams.

Odes to clouds and stars and thunder—windy
Muses hovering nigh—
What has Thrace worth Athens' wonder, which you
poets come to buy?

Athens—Athens—crammed with sages.—How you
talk and praise the place!
Athens' thoughts are for the ages; we're barbarians
here in Thrace.

What can Thrace tell such a city?—(though 'twas
here that Orpheus dwelt,
Whose sweet lyre by power of pity made the heart
of Hades melt.

Ev'n in death his sorrow stirred him; still he
 called his twice-lost bride—
 Till these Thracian rocks which heard him *Ah*
Eurydice! replied.)*

Dreary fables! (Dotards love them.) Myths for
 Attic bards to sing!
 Think, my soul! what heights above them, in his
 beauty stands *our* King.

Not your goat-god, Pan the giver—not your
 Phœbus, called divine,—
 Not your Nymphs of wood and river—nor wild
 Bacchus,† flushed with wine—

* In Virgil's description of the lament for Eurydice,
 this particular nation is specially mentioned by name:

flerunt Rhodopeiæ arces,
 Altaque Pangœa, et Rhesi Mavortia tellus
 Atque *Gætæ*, atque Hebrus, atque Actias Orithyia.

GEORGIC iv. 461-3.

† The Scythians upbraid the Greeks for holding festivals
 to Bacchus, and say it is shocking to believe in a god who
 drives men to madness and frenzy.

HERODOTUS, lib. iv., cap. 79.

But a god, these gods transcending, who in deep
 compassion gave
To rude hearts a hope unending;—yet himself a
 man—a slave.

Ah! your wish? 'twas no derision? then forgive
 my speech uncouth,
You shall hear how first the vision came upon me
 in my youth;—

When his own lips told the story,—how he woke
 and left the dead,
And the skies were flames of glory, and the
 Autumn woods were red.

Here he lived—a man with mortals. In these
 lanes and streets he taught,
That there waits behind death's portals fuller joy
 beyond our thought.

Roses at the storm's subsidence sunwards turn
 with eyelids wet,—
So—our dark minds to the guidance of his perfect
 life we set.

On from height to height he took us—night behind
and day before;
But he failed us and forsook us, closed his lips
and taught no more.

When each year, its slow course keeping, brought
again that day of doom,
All the land with sound of weeping watched and
gathered round his tomb.

On this third great fast I wandered from the noisy
crowds apart,
Through the woods alone, and pondered all his
teachings in my heart;

Till I turned, (a voice was calling) and a stranger
by me stood.
Long we talked. The leaves were falling, and the
birds sang through the wood.

And I told what pain had stung us—why this day
for grief was kept—
One we loved, who walked among us, now three
years in darkness slept.

Questions more—and more replying—till he bade
me answer sooth,
If we knew, past all denying, that this man was
dead in truth.

All at once strange thoughts possessed me, and I
turned my head aside,
But persistent long he pressed me, asking thrice
ere I replied.

“Master”—then—(my eyes were filling) “see, the
fading woods are red.
Autumn comes with footstep chilling. All my
thoughts are with the dead.

“Speak and tell me, I implore thee; where these
three years hast thou dwelt?
Master, see, I kneel before thee.” (Low then at
his feet I knelt.)

“We shall follow all thou bid'st us. Stay on
earth, and leave the dead.
Dwell again, dear lord, amidst us. Drink our wine
and eat our bread.”

Poet, days and nights were numbered, ere they
found me in that wood—

Where, they said, in trance I slumbered—heard
them not—nor understood.

But in truth my soul had drifted into thoughts
beyond their reach—

By the strength o' the god uplifted, and the
largeness of his speech.

Days and nights ! but never heeding glare of
noon nor midnight dim—

Only knew his hand was leading, and my feet
were following him.

Only prayed, (and this with weeping): “Master,
bring thy guests with thee.

Call the dead and bound and sleeping. Shout to
wake them. Set them free.”

Poet, when the shores are barest, comes the tide
with weeds and foam ;—

When the leaves and flowers are rarest, reapers
bring their harvest home ;—

So, to me—old, weak, forsaken—still he comes and
whispers low.

Oft at dead of night I waken. Forth into the
dark I go.

And I feel the god is near me, and I fill the
streets with cries,
Till the startled sleepers hear me—from their beds
the slumberers rise.

One by one strange sights come to me, and the
rapt crowd breathless stands,
For they know the god speaks through me, when
I shout and stretch my hands:

“Who are these so pale and trembling, scourged
and goaded through the street?
Cursing crowds like wolves assembling — jeering
mouths and trampling feet?

“Shall I mock you, bruised and panting, young-
eyed martyrs for the truth?
Onward—courage—no recanting. Strength befits
the years of youth.

"Sons, I come to die beside you. Comrades, press
your lips to mine.

Take my hand in yours to guide you, straight
through death to the divine.

"From earth's tumult and affliction, human hate
and writhing rod,
To the peace and benediction and the dear smile
of the god.

"Never give me tears for kisses. No soul's hope
was yet destroyed.
Ne'er one life its purpose misses. No man's death
is waste and void.

"Woman in the darkness weeping, cease that pierc-
ing cry of pain.
Close thy swollen eyes for sleeping. Springtime's
joys shall come again.

"What? A *woman's* smile undid thee? lured thine
own love from thy breast?
Seek no vengeance. *I* forbid thee. Only fold thine
hands and rest;—

“Fearing not the blind worm’s fretting, nor Corruption’s wasting tooth,

For the sweet gift of forgetting loves which cankered in their youth.

“Oh the darkness! oh the sleepers! Shall they wake not when we call?

Sing your song’s commencement, reapers. Summer goes. The brown leaves fall.

“What! Old man? so gaunt and shrunken? bone-heap flung aside to die?

Palsied limbs and cheeks deep sunken—who and what and whence am I?

“Why, thy son—thy child—thy daughter, on thy knees in old times nursed.

Drink, my father! Here is water in abundance for thy thirst.

“Shrink not when sharp pangs assail thee. Fear not that last gasp for breath.

Not for weakness shall *I* fail thee—not for *any* pains of death.

“Mother, in old age neglected—left in darkness—
cast away—

(Once thine arms a child protected. On thy breast
a sweet son lay).

“Old and sick—yet unforgetting—lift thy failing
eyes to me.

By these tears thy white hair wetting—speak—
forgive me. I am he.

“Who art thou with loud repenting, beating at the
doors of graves?

Waste no more this wild lamenting. Thou art
mad. Thy white mouth raves.

“Hark! I call—my voice is soothing—they have
heard—they will not stay—

And the daylight's hands are smoothing every print
of death away.

“Lie in tombs no more—forsaken—lost to life, and
deaf to love.

Rise. Unfold your hands and waken. See the
dawn. It breaks above.

“Come and bring your dear dead faces—move—and
smile—and talk—and see.

Come and walk in sheltered places through the
Autumn woods with me.

“Oh the daylight! oh the sleepers! Look! They
come. They were not dead.

Sing your song’s conclusion, reapers. Harvest glows.
The woods are red.”

Then I hear the listeners talking: “’Tis the
slave who loved the god.

Hand in hand together walking, once the forest
paths they trod.

“Three long years the god had slumbered.
Then he woke and left the dead.

Eight and fifty years are numbered, and the
Autumn woods were red.”

Then I shout in exultation,—then I dance and
leap and sing,—

And he hides my desolation in the shadows of his
wing.

And the whole crowd joins unbidden, and they
 leap and dance with me—
Singing of the clear life hidden by the darkened
 life we see.

Still I lead with shout and gesture, and my heart
 grows young and gay.
And my years drop like a vesture, which men
 fold and put away.

Till at last the god forsakes me, and my lips are
 sealed by sleep.

When the next day's dawn awakes me, patient to
 the fields I creep.

Slave again—old tasks fulfilling—now my feet the
 wine-press tread,—

Now my hands the soil are tilling,—now I grind
 the corn for bread.

But despite the toil and distance, I shall yet see
 face to face

Him whose fathomless existence deep in all Earth's
 signs I trace—

Present in the white sun's burning, in the valley's
flashing streams,
In the daylight's soft returning, in the dimness of
our dreams.

Yes ! The slave is god. I know it. And my
slave's heart bursts in flame.
Tell them all in Athens, poet. Spread abroad
Zalmoxis' name.

Not Poseidon, nor Apollo—Zeus above, and Dis
below.
Thracians *know* the god they follow. Tell the
Athenian sages so.

[And before Darius reached the Ister, he first subdued the Getans, who believe in immortality. Now the Thracians who hold Salmydessus, and those who dwell above Apollonia and the city of Mesambria, and those who are called Scyrmianians, and Nypsœans, submitted to Darius without fighting. But the Getans, who are the most heroic and upright of all the Thracians, made a stubborn resistance before being conquered.]

And this is the sort of belief they have about immortality; they think that they will never themselves die,—but that when one of them dies, he has gone to be with the god, Zalmoxis, whom some believe to be the same as Gebeleizes These are the same Thracians, who shoot arrows at the sky, when it thunders, as if threatening their god;—and they fully believe that there is no other god but theirs.

Now as far as I could learn from the Greeks inhabiting the Hellespont and the Euxine, this Zalmoxis was himself a man, and lived in slavery at Samos under Pythagoras son of Mnesarchus; but having obtained his liberty, and acquired great wealth, he returned to his native land. There he found the Thracians leading evil lives, and grossly ignorant. But Zalmoxis himself had been accustomed to the Ionian mode of life, and to manners superior to those of the Thracians, such as were in vogue with the Greeks, and with his master, Pythagoras, who was not the feeblest sage of Greece.

He therefore prepared a large chamber, to which he invited the leading men of the cities, and gave them every entertainment, and taught them, that neither he himself, nor they, his guests, nor even any of their descendants, should ever die;—but that they would go to a land where they would dwell for ever, in the enjoyment of all blessings.

Now while he acted in this way, and taught these things, he was at the same time building a subterranean house; and when the house was finished, he disappeared from the Thracians. And having gone down into his house under the ground, he lived there three years.

But they were much distressed, and mourned for him, supposing him to be dead. But in the fourth year he appeared to the Thracians.

Then they believed those things which Zalmoxis had told them.

These are the things which they say that he did.

For my own part, I do not dispute the story about this man and his subterranean house; at the same time I have no strong faith in it; but I certainly think that this Zalmoxis must have lived many years before Pythagoras. But whether there ever was such a man as Zalmoxis, or whether he is simply the god whom the Getans worship, I have now finished with him.

These people then, who hold this belief, were subdued by the Persians, and followed the army with the rest.

HERODOTUS, lib. iv., cap. 94-96.]

Although "Zamolxis" is the spelling generally received, that adopted in the text is thought to be a nearer approach to the original name. See Falconer's notes to his translation of Strabo.

TWO FIGURES AT DELPHI.

AS NARRATED BY SOLON TO CRÆSUS, KING OF LYDIA.

With the tumult of great shouting long the temple's
walls did ring.

Well was done the deed, past doubting. (I myself
was there, O king.)

“Happy mother,” all exclaiming—“since such sons
obey thy voice;—

When her heroes Greece is naming, let her heart
for these rejoice.”

Then the lady smiling proudly : "Argive sons and
daughters, hear ;

Ye applaud my sons so loudly ; (truly Argos holds
them dear.)

"Lo, I ask the gods above them, that their deed
this day be blessed.

Tell me, ye who praise and love them, of the gods'
gifts which were best."

Then while all the people wavered, doubting much
what choice to make,

Forth stepped one by Fortune favoured, richly
robed, who gaily spake.

"Ask for life;" he urged upon her ; "Pray for years
that they may live.

Youth for joy and age for honour—these the best
gifts gods can give.

"Oh the mirth of youth ! the madness ! Fill the
goblets. Joy is free.

Bacchus comes to crown our gladness. Bacchus is
the god for glee.

“Hark ! the music louder swelling—Oh the harp,
the singer’s voice !

Troops of guests come to our dwelling. Comrades,
lovers, friends rejoice.

“Life is sweet. May life be lengthened through
bright paths for pleasure made.

Pray thou that their youth be strengthened, and
the steps of age delayed.”

Thus, the praise of life declaring, freely he his
counsel gave.

Next spake one, renowned for daring — bold as
Ajax, proud and brave :

“Ask not years for vacant pleasure. Courage is
life’s noblest crown.

Strength is man’s sublimest treasure. Valour clothes
him with renown.

“Oh the shout, to battle calling ! chariot-crash and
warriors slain !

(Native land ! See tyrants falling. We have saved
thee. Smile again.)

“Homewards then, the trophies bringing ;—see the
frantic crowd’s delight—

All the world, with praises ringing, hails the victors
from the fight.

“Who are these with blood-stained vesture, foremost
of the conquering ones,
Bold of front and proud of gesture? . . . Lady,
these shall be thy sons.”

Thus he praised the brave man’s daring, and the
people’s heart grew glad.

Next spake one of feeble bearing, hollow-cheeked
and meanly clad :

“What is fame? the torch we kindled burns its
heart’s own life away.

All the warriors’ deeds have dwindled. All the
thoughts of kings decay.

“Strength for brutes ;—the oxen need it, and the
slaves that dig and grind.

Thought and Reason far exceed it,—Knowledge,
Wisdom, power of Mind.

“If with these thy sons be gifted—lady, they shall
search and know

How the great hills were uplifted—whence the
mighty rivers flow.

“How the loud storm rolls its thunder, and the
white flash flies afar,—

How the rosebuds burst asunder, and the light
comes to the star.

“How the clouds, in bright showers breaking, on
the parched fields pattering fall,—

How the winds, like ghosts awaking, through the
woods at twilight call.

“How the daylight glory lingers round the hill-tops
of the west,—

How the dawn with rosy fingers wakes the shepherd
from his rest.

“How the seed, its thin sheath rending, in the
black gloom spreads its root—

Then to sunlight slow ascending waves high boughs
and leaves and fruit.

“How the stork in fir-trees hiding for her young a
nest hath spread,—

How the worm with dull brain guiding in the
darkness makes its bed.

“How the flowers derive their sweetness,—and the
small bees bear in mind

All through summer’s long completeness, bitter
days must come behind.

“How the wild young birds are fashioned, sailing
high on slender wing,

How they pour their songs impassioned, when the
green earth wakes in spring.

“How the babe, though small we found him, day
by day in growth expands,

Whether Scythian snows surround him, or the sun-
scorched Libyan sands.

“Whence came man through all the ages—what the
Persian thinks, or Mede—

Or what old Assyrian sages carved on stones for
men to read.

“Beauteous form, yea shapen finely—face to dream
of—eyes of flame—

And a voice which cries divinely ‘From the gods—
the gods—I came.’

“See his works—the bridge—the city—noble statues
—temples fair;—

Then his soul—what wrath and pity—song and
discord—hope—despair.

“If the gods should grant these brothers power
such secrets to discern,

Write them on the rocks that others in all future
times may learn.

“Let them make their wise inscriptions, as the
priests and magi did

For the kings of the Ægyptians, slumbering in
the pyramid.

“Till high wisdom shall be treasured, pomp and
wealth accounted nought,

And the meanest life be measured by the greatness
of its thought.”

Then he ceased, his white face glowing for neglected
Learning's sake.

Last, a youth, with long hair flowing, and large
dreaming eyes thus spake :

“Lady, pause a while, and hearken, ere thy prayer
be past recall.

Autumn grows. The sweet days darken. What is
knowledge after all ?

“When the brain which learned and wondered
crumbles into senseless earth,
When the soul and flesh are sundered, what is all
this wisdom worth ?

“Oh the wine, the lamps, the laughter ! but the
slaves toil in the sun.
What becomes of man thereafter, when both feast
and toil are done ?

“Should his sweetest friend and lover by his bed
lamenting stand,
And his cheeks with kisses cover, would he speak
and wave his hand ?

“Shall the noise of arrows shake him, when the
foes are in the field ?

Doth his children’s weeping wake him, when his
mouth and ears are sealed ?

“If we cried : ‘O friend, thou starvest. See the
pleasant banquet spread,
And the mellow fruits of harvest ;’—would he
smile and turn his head ?

“Oh the love ! the long embraces ! Oh the bliss !
the deep content !
What becomes of all sweet faces, when the last
sweet smile is spent ?

“Oh the wine ! the dance ! the chorus ! shout and
revel unrestrained !
Tell us now what lies before us, when the wine’s
last drop is drained.

“Lady, let the gift thou cravest for thy sons whom
all extol,
(Fairest youths and best and bravest) be renewed
life for the soul.

“Hence with death ! No pile’s fierce firing ! Raise
no mounds and break no sods.

Utmost life is our desiring—life, the raiment of
the gods !

“Vaster life than man’s dull dreaming—mingling
with the far immense—

Softly in the star’s light gleaming—in the tempest’s
voice intense ;

“At the dayspring’s purple portal—’mid the cham-
bers of the deep,

Breathing breath of youth immortal—if they waken
—if they sleep.

“Life to fail and sicken never—calm and godlike,
wide and free—

Ask for life which flows for ever as the waters fill
the sea.”

When he ceased, the people gazing stood a space,
and no one spoke,

Till her voice the lady raising, calmly thus the
silence broke :

“O ye gods for ever living, whilst all time its
circle runs,
Whate’er gift of all your giving is your *best*—give
to my sons.”

Then with merry noise retiring, to their games the
people went—
Sport and pleasant song desiring, all that day in
joy they spent.

But while these the feast were keeping, I myself
withdrew to look,
Where those tired youths now lay sleeping in the
temple’s shadiest nook.

Faces such as heaven-born sculpture strives with
cunning hand to make
For dark places of sepulture and for dreaming
memory’s sake.

Soft white feet and limbs well moulded, twining
lightly in their rest,
Arms about each other folded—face to face, and
breast to breast.

Now as if the distant shouting caught their ears
from hill and vale—

Now as though disturbed by doubting ‘shall we
win or must we fail?’

And the younger murmured: “Brother, are we
near? Shall all be well?”

So they woke and kissed each other and once more
to sleep they fell.

But at last the sun descended through red flames
which round him rolled.

’Twas the hour when sports are ended, shepherds
lead their flocks to fold.

Then the joyous crowd advancing to the temple
came once more—

Came with harp and song and dancing—(garlands
in their hands they bore.)

SONG.

Brothers, wake. The day is sinking;
And the gods have heard the prayer.
Here are wine-cups for your drinking—
Laurels for your brows to wear.

Waken to the voice of singing.

Waken to the setting sun.

Crowns of lilies love is bringing.

All our merry games are done.

Soon shall stars their watch be keeping.

Soon abroad shall nightwinds roam.

Whilst we revelled, ye were sleeping.

Waken for the gathering home.

But no answer these did make them, till anon the
people wept—

Calling all the gods to wake them, but they lay
and smiled and slept.

Then I spake myself unfearing, as a Greek should
talk with Greeks :

“ Sons of Argos, give me hearing. Solon the
Athenian speaks.

“ Glory of the valorous-hearted—splendour of the
fighter’s fame—

High renown by song imparted — honour to the
wise man’s name—

“Every good by life intended — all its joys and
meanings deep—

In the gods’ BEST GIFT are blended—whom they
love receiving SLEEP.

“Cease your tears, not worth the shedding. Wail
not in this sacred place.

See the smile divinely spreading on each sleeper’s
radiant face.

“On them both, the light still shining, whilst without
the world grows dim—

Never break that soft entwining—hand from hand
and limb from limb.

“Choose a spot where trees grow shady—where the
bird’s wild voice beguiles”

Then came whispers *Hush! the lady!*

* * * * *

So I left them . . . (tears and smiles)!

[Cleobis and Biton were Argives by birth, and enjoyed an ample fortune and such superiority of bodily strength that they had both of them been crowned as conquerors at the

public games. And this is the story that is told about them. When the Argives were holding a feast to Juno, it was specially important that their mother should be conveyed in her chariot to the temple. But the oxen did not arrive from the field in time. Then these youths, putting themselves under the yoke, drew the chariot, in which their mother was seated ;—and after a journey of forty-five furlongs, they arrived at the temple.

Then after they had done this, and the deed had been witnessed by the whole of the multitude that was assembled for the feast, their lives were terminated in a most auspicious manner ;—and by the fate of these young men, the deity plainly showed, that death is a far greater blessing to man than life.

For the Argive men who stood round praised the strength of the youths ; and the Argive women congratulated their mother, that she had brought up such children. And the mother, being greatly delighted both with the deed itself, and the glory which had followed it, stood before the shrine and prayed that the deity would grant to Cleobis and Biton, her two sons, whatever gift was the best which could be bestowed on mankind.

And after this prayer, when the sacrifices had been offered, and the feasting was over, these young men lay down to sleep in the temple itself.

But they never rose again, and in this way ended their lives.

And the Argives caused images to be made of them, and set them up at Delphi, as of men who deserved to be honoured.

HERODOTUS, lib. i., cap. 31.]

GANYMEDE.

ZEUS.

What see'st thou, Ganymede, my little slave?
Why stand'st thou at the portal, gazing long?

GANYMEDE.

I see the green earth far below my feet
Make ready for the vintage. Let me go.

ZEUS.

The fields shall lose their beauty. Men will search
In vain thereon for aught save bitter herbs,
And leavings of the sickle. Do not weep.

GANYMEDE.

The voices of my comrades! They explore
Mountain and cliff and crag, and call my name,
And curse thy dreaded eagle. Let me go.

ZEUS.

Thou dost behold but shadows, and those sounds
Are only empty winds which fill thine ears.

GANYMEDE.

I am too young to be thy cupbearer.
I need my mother's face to comfort me.
My sister's voice is sweeter than the lyre
Of Hermes. Many are the friends I love.

ZEUS.

Ev'n these in time shall perish—put away
With all the old dead winters. Weep no more.

GANYMEDE.

The splendour of these banquets chills my soul.
I tremble in the presence of the gods.

Thy thunder stuns me with its deafening roar.
I fear thy lightning, as the strayed lamb fears
The lean wolf's glittering eyeballs. Let me go.

ZEUS.

Drink first of all this cup, sweet Ganymede.
It is the cup of parting, and will give
Thy young limbs strength through all thy perilous
flight
And long steep passage to the shadowy earth.

GANYMEDE *drinks.*

O that my mouth were as a harp, to make
Strange music in the hearing of my king !
The gates of life are opened ; new thoughts flow,
And crowd my mind, as bearers of bright lamps
Come, when day darkens, to some temple's doors.

Drinks again.

The pillars of this palace are of gold.
My steps are on the clouds. The tempest makes
Obeisance at my coming. When I filled
My horn with music, then the stars of heaven

Gathered to hear me ; and I took their flames
 For fillets to my temples, and I wove
 Their glimmering lights for girdle to my loins.
 The darkness is my prey. I chase it far
 With showers of crystal arrows. When I wake,
 My chariot bears me on the winds of dawn
 To usher in the sunrise

Stay—look there !

Those pleading faces—sick as earthly hope
 And pale as earthly passion ! They would lay
 These halls in ruins. Drive them from the gates.

I poise the thunder on my small white palm.
 I spread my limbs at evening on the wings
 Of far-off sunsets ; ev'n the lightning fawns
 About the naked gleaming of my feet.

* * * * *

Again they come ! They beckon ! They beseech !
 Who brought them to the feast ? Who showed the
 way ?

Why do they weep at banquets ? Hear them not.
 I know no Ganymeds, the sons of Tros.
 Forbid their lingering. Tell them we are gods !

CALYPSO.

Calypso, when the gods had given decree
That she should hold no longer from his home
The hero, great Odysseus, sought his face,
And thus addressed him, using wingèd words :

“Odysseus, long before thou saw’st this isle,
I dwelt in peace among these woods and hills,
A goddess in my godlike solitude.
Thee by the hate of vengeful gods pursued,
And sinking in the storm, my pity saved.
Now I complete my bounty. I bestow
Life without end, and make thee as the gods.
Only be joyous. Only think no more
Of Ithaca. Forget the ancient days.

“For, (hear me)—when the traitorous Sirens sang,
Thou did'st entreat thy mariners to unbind
The coiling cords—forgetful of thine home;
Yet had thy will prevailed, thou long hadst lain
Unwept and tombless on the sea-washed rocks.
But my high gift is priceless, and my heart
Was ne'er perfidious; (thou hast oft confessed);
And greater songs I know than ever sang
Siren, or Nymph, or that enchantress dire,
Ææan Circe in her marble halls.

I am of loftier lineage—fairer name—
Daughter of ancient Atlas, all-revered,
And surely worthy of a mortal's love.

“For mortals, howsoe'er renowned in life,
Yet in the end are driven with slavish steps
To dreary Hades—listening to the wail
Of sad *Cocytus*;—light deserts their eyes.
But thine shall be undarkened; thou shalt grow
In youth and strength and beauty through all
time;—

In knowledge broadened and in kingly grace,
And radiant in thy presence as a god.

I will attend thy footsteps—ceasing not
To fill thy cup with nectar; thou shalt wear
Resplendent garments, and shalt comprehend
With a god's grasp the sources of the world,
The depth and centre of all wondrous things—
Of dawns and twilights and the song of birds.

“Odysseus, when I hear thy lips recite
The famous deeds done on the plains of Troy,
My famished soul is feasted with the sound;
This lonely isle seems peopled, and I cry
Thou art a god already;—often then,
These hills and forests and near-floating clouds,
Taking new shapes, have grown to my rapt gaze
The very walls of Ilion; then I hear
The shout of armies, and in visible form
Achilles rises; Hector's towering plume
Waves in the breeze; Patroclus leads the fight,
Or peerless Ajax, son of Telamon;
And high-born Helen on the walls I see,
And Priam bringing on his mule-drawn car
The countless ransom.

“Then, as day departs,

Come darker scenes—the last, dread, fateful night—
Pallas exults ; Apollo is dismayed.

“Hath thy voice ceased? Oh yes, for see—they
fade—

Those air-built phantoms, ships and tents and towers:
The battle's maddening music dies away.
Only the love-lorn nightingale's low call
Comes from the cedars, making soft accord
With the long rhythmic rollings of the sea.

This is Ogygia. Troy was but a dream.”

She paused, and then Odysseus since he saw
The passion gathering in her face, replied:
“Immortal in thy beauty and thy days!
I do not hold that none except the gods
Are deathless. In some sort I reckon man
Immortal also. In our sons we live.
For see mine heir, Telemachus, ev'n now
Perchance an exile, wastes his life in wo.
I must restore him to his kingly place,
Establishing a noble line of chiefs

For endless ages. For 'twere shame indeed
If any, speaking in the after-time,
Should tell how base Odysseus, house and race
Betrayed and bartered for the lustrous eyes
And rosy lips of godhood—(spousal gifts
Of bright Calypso). Thou, oh unsurpassed
In beauty and in moving and in voice,
Immortal always from thy lip's first breath,
Hold high thine heritage. Man must face night—
In toil and peril, and through cloudy death,
Keeping unmoved the purpose of his soul."

He ceased. The goddess awed withstood no more.
Then after four days' toil, a raft was built,
And when the fifth dawn touched Ogygian hills,
Forth sailed the hero, seeking his own shores.

With steadfast gaze Calypso watched the bark
Rising and falling on the restless wave,
Then climbed the highest peak of all the isle,
And marked with straining sight that faint dim
speck.

The wide-winged birds might reach it, (only they).

Anon it vanished, swallowed in the mist,
But still Calypso watched the empty waves
Till the stars rose, and all the hills were dark.

Why should she weep? The isle was all her own,
The forests and the mountains, and the seas,
Lifting their voices in one common song—
The sweet grot with its speaking silences.
The birds still loved her, and the flowers now dim
Would spread their folded leaves at next day's
dawn.

A dim speck on the ocean! What was that?
All that she now was, she had been before—
A goddess in her godlike solitude!

MACARIA.

Up from undated time they come,
The martyr souls of heathendom,
And to His cross and passion bring
Their fellowship of suffering.

WHITTIER.

When all the oracles had given one voice
That nothing but a guiltless virgin's life
Could save the city, and appease the gods—
Macaria, when she knew all hearts dismayed,
(Macaria, which being translated, means
The "blessed one") offered herself to death.

Then, while all waited silent for the priest,
One famed for fluent tongue assayed to speak,
But bruised his brave speech by his quavering
voice,
And said this only, 'Pray thou to the gods.

Then with these words he wakened deep desire
And yearning in Macaria's heart to speak.
As when a river, bound by winter's frost
In a long silence, wakes at last from sleep,
And melting at the potent call of Spring
Floods all the valley, filling it with sound—
So melted into speech Macaria's thoughts,
And overflowed in words, which brought relief :
“The gods? oh never name them! Wrong is done.
Truth is a trembling suppliant. Fraud exults.
The oppressor's throat is hoarse with bitter jest.
All day the sinless suffer; and the priest
Walks in the temple; and the gods are glad,
Heeding no victims. Take from me these shrines
And rites and incantations. I would speak
Only as children, sad to say last words
To fellow-children. All the ways of death
Are dark and searchless. Can the priest show
more?

“Hear these few wishes then, (O bosom-friends,
Who gather at the parting of the ways,
Ready with each last office)—build a tomb
Within the green wood's verge; it will not wrong

The gentle Dryads ; let the place be called
The 'Virgin's Rest ;' ye know the haunts I love
And in all seasons, how those woods are fair ;—
Whether when Summer makes the old trees gay,
Clothed to the girdle in full festive robes :
When Autumn drops its burden of sad leaves :
Or Winter sweeps them to the drifting clouds—
(Soon to descend, pale showers from paler skies) :
Or Spring approaches, and the warm winds kiss
The wings of swallows, and the barren boughs
Melt into leaf, as waves melt into foam.

"'Tis nothing. Do not look so. If I paused,
Indeed I was not weeping. I but thought
How soon for me the gods have laid their hands
On all my seasons. As the harper smites,
The strings must answer. What can children do,
If night dismays them, and no friends are near ?
I pray you, if ye love me, gather still
In those old woods, and say on festal days,
One to another, 'Let us keep the feast,
And hold our merry-makings round her urn—
The Virgin's Rest,' and let the place resound

With song and smitten cymbal and sweet lyre,
And fill the pauses of the music well
With happy greetings and auspicious words.
Forbid sad songs and thoughts. Let no one say :
'Her eyes are dark. Our sister sees no more
The holy daylight,'—while content I sleep
In my small chamber, though scant room be left
For bidding guests to banquet, and no sound
Of showers that beat the roof, or bird which sings
Loud on the lintel, shall awake me more.

"And one word yet. I pray you, hand this down
To children's children. Teach your little ones.
And if some prattlers doubt your tale—'they thought
That only men with helmets on their hair
Saved cities'—oh rebuke them not ! (tears come
So soon to little eyelids),—but reply :
'Children, the heart's dust in this urn was once
Strong as the bow of Phœbus. They who die
For home and country have no cause to dread
The forces of the darkness. They shall walk
Through the deep shadow and shall fear no wrong.
And if with pangs of heart and life-blood drops

One tender maiden saved us, when the sword
And helmet failed, doubtless in her last hour
A glory as of sunrise wrapped her soul,
Or gods themselves came down with golden lamps,
Making death's darkness brighter than high noon.' "

ORESTES.

For she too, though she was a Grecian woman, and the daughter of the king of men, yet wept sometimes, and hid her face in her robe.

DE QUINCEY.

ὄμμα θεῖον ἔισω πέπλων

EURIPIDES.

Bright and brighter ! how it falls
That sweet sun on these grey walls.
How the storm-clouds and the gloom
For the blessed light make room.
From my mind the darkness dies ;
From my brain the madness flies ;
Sister, raise my head awhile ;
I will talk, and you shall smile.

Brighter still ! it sends again
Summer memories through my brain ;
When in tender days, we two
Laughed and played, as children do,
And the sunshine round us spread
Showed us pleasant paths to tread.
In the woods sweet sounds were heard ;
In the woods dwelt every bird,
Up among the branches green,
Where the small brown nests were seen.

But the birds sang best of all
In one island, green and small.
In the stream that island stood,
Bright with flowers and thick with wood.
And we said in childish joy
That charmed spot was famous Troy.
At the edge where willows grew,
Stood the sacred walls, we knew.
And the tall reeds round the coast
Were the countless Troian host.
We were valiant heroes then—
Children of the king of men.

If we once that stream could ford,
 Troy would tremble at our sword,
 We would search each nook so green,
 We would reign there—king and queen—
 And would sing such pleasant words
 In the sunshine with the birds.

So we waded, I and you,
 Naked-limbed the waters through.
 But midway your courage died.
 “Brother, bear me back!” you cried.
 You forgot your greatness then—
 Daughter of the king of men.
 Sharply then I blamed your fear:
 ‘Priam’s sons your cries would hear.
 How would Hector laugh for scorn,
 And the chiefs in Ilium born;
 Our own heroes would deride,
 Yea, the king, our father chide—
 In his child dishonoured then,
 Agamemnon, king of men.’

Then you wept, because I chid;
 In your robe your face you hid:

(That small robe so white and fair,
Which in Argos children wear.)

Ah, you smile! that mimic Troy
Soon we reached with shouts of joy
And we sang there pleasant words
In the sunshine with the birds.
When we told our fancies wild
To our mother—*how* she smiled!

Mother Mother . (I forgot)
Furies—hence! Approach me not.
Hideous bags with snake-twined hair,
Get you gone—depart—forbear.
Dismal faces, mad with wo,
Sick with sorrow—let me go.
Savage scorpions, dread to name,
Tongues like swords, and eyes like flame,
Cursing mouths and scorching breath,
Hate and horror, blood and death!
Crawling monsters red with gore,
Writhing shapes, oh writhe no more.
Ravenous fangs! that flesh is hot.

Hear it shriek ! oh, tear it not.
 Shew no streaming wounds to me.
 Close them. Hide them. Let them be.
 If I sinned—if blood I spilt,
 It was vengeance due to guilt.
 His wronged ghost beset my path,
 Filled my soul with sleepless wrath ;—
 Then I did—oh what a deed !
 But the gods that crime decreed.
 Would such deed had ne'er been done !
 No such mother ! no such son !

Ah ! you fade, as phantoms do ;—
 Gone . . . past . . . vanished

Sister ? you ?

Why, I thought that far away
 You had fled nor dared to stay.
 Nay ? your arms were round me ? what ?
 And you spoke ? I heard you not.
 Called me 'brother' soft and low ?
 Gentle girl, I did not know.
 Fixed and stony, did you see
 Glaring eyes which glared on me ?

Pray the gods they come not back—
Foul and fierce and filthy black.

Yes, my talk is wild indeed.
I was sick. 'Tis sleep I need.
If I sleep, I shall forget.
Lean your face down—closer yet.
Are those tears, which mark your cheek?
Nay, I know. You need not speak.
Though you fled not, when they came,
Though you stood here, all the same,
Yet you wept; I know you did.
In your robe your face you hid :
(That large robe, so queenly fair,
Which in Argos, maidens wear.)
Daughter of the king of men,
Weep not. All is well again.

Yes, I'm wearied. Sleep at last !
What good sleep brings ! all seems past.
Wake me if he comes.—If who ?
Why, the King. I thought you knew.
Far in Troy—but you forget ;
Such long years, and not come yet !

I can scarcely hear you now.

Yes, draw nearer. Stroke my brow.

Tell the watchman when the ships—

No tears needed! Kiss my lips.

If the King should come—the King—

.

Sister, *how* those birds do sing!

Walk beside me on the shore.

Children cross the stream no more.

Deep and wide the waters rush . . . ,

Let the birds sing Sister . . . hush.

HECUBA.

Son of all my sons most dear,
Hear me but this once—nay, hear.
Turn not from my prayers away.
These are words I needs must say.

Three nights since, Cassandra came
To my couch and called my name.
Long she talked of swords and graves,
Blazing homes and weeping slaves.
“ Daughter, daughter ! art thou wild ?
Get thee to thy rest, my child.
Hector lives. The foe shall flee.
Hector fears not. Why should we ? ”

Vain my words, while she distraught
 Still in piercing tones besought :
 “ Ilion falls. The flames are hot.
 Spare us. Spare us. Slay us not.”

Hector, be thou ne’er so brave,
 Mock not if my heart misgave.
 Pallas with Achilles stands,
 Gives him conquest in his hands.
 Therefore, by the gods above,
 By thy mother’s fears and love,
 By this bosom where my child
 Lay in safety once and smiled,
 By thy father’s whitened hairs,
 By thy young wife’s grief and prayers,
 By the sons of strong-built Troy,
 Whom this wolf-heart shall destroy,—
 Hear me, Hector, do not wait ;
 Stand no more without the gate.
 Let us seek Apollo’s shrine,
 Bringing gifts and pouring wine.
 If Troy’s high defender heed,
 If the kind gods have decreed,

On some happier-fated day,
This dread slaughterer thou shalt slay,
And the Argive ships shall yet
Sail to far-off Argos set.
So shall Troy triumphant raise
Songs in all her gates of praise ;
So shall future bards proclaim,
Steeped in splendour Hector's name.
When our tale of grief is made,
None of thy great deeds shall fade,
Mixed with all the woes we bear,
But renowned and good and fair—
Burdened much with tears and wrong,
But immortal made by song.

ELOISA, ABBESS.

“Lord, when prostrate at Thine altars,¹ I confessed
my guilt and shame,
Wherefore would'st Thou not consume them in
Thy spirit's fervent flame ?”

“There's my soul's faith proved ” I answered ;
“love like ours is hard to kill,²
Through the fast and scourge and penance and
the black years burning still.”

Then he penned that last epistle, (sadder message
could not be):

“ Write no more, for God forbids it.” Write no
more, no more to me.”

God, oh God, if wife and husband sitting in the
hearth-fire’s light,

With the blessed children round them are found
worthy in Thy sight;—

If for love’s sake they are joyful, and at last come
to Thy rest,

Why are we for love’s sake tortured, left in exile
and distressed?

Doubtless, God, Thou art our Father, hast Thou
joy to hear us moan?†

Must our hearts to gain redemption freeze and
harden into stone?

Oh my prince, my king, my teacher, are the old
times all forgot?

Master, come; the lamp is kindled. Come, for
God forbids it not.

Fling aside your cowl and cassock. Shake the
sandals from your feet.

Come and sing the happy lovesongs⁵ which you
made when love was sweet.

Ere your flesh was worn with fasting,⁶ ere your
face grew white with pain,

Ere the sea-foam smote the convent-windows in
your wild Bretagne.⁷

When I read *O fons amoris*, (blessed saints, forgive
my sin !)

Or the nuns sing *De profundis*, your love-rhymes
come chiming in,

Till your voice drowns all the chanting,⁸ and I
leave this dreary place,

And I feel your arms close round me,⁹ and the
smile comes to my face.

Oh you love me ! how you love me ! and the
lanes are white in May,

And I pour my soul before you as in old times
far away.

Dropping on the sacred missal then my tears like
rivers flow.¹⁰

Satan hath desired to have me. Satan sifts as
wheat I know.

De Profundis! De Profundis! from the depths!

(the depths indeed!)

From the depths of all my sorrows—from the
depths of love and need.

But the nuns think¹¹: ‘holy abbess! ’tis her
heavenly home she sees.

Now its light her face transfigures. Now she weeps
on bended knees.’

Heaven? oh yes. I saw heaven opened, waving
palms and jasper sea,

And the saved in bliss ecstatic far too rapt to look
tow’rds me.

But some women-saints beheld me and their eyes
grew soft and dim,

And they prayed to God Eternal: “Let her write
once more to him.”

Ah, but Hell! in Hell I wakened—chains and
darkness, hate and wrong—

Though I scarcely felt the torments—(I am used
to pain so long);

But the lost ones, singing, shouting, wild and fierce
 and mad with pain,
 Cried for ever and for ever: "Write no more, no
 more again!"

Who hath told you? Who hath told you? Who
 hath breathed *his* words in hell?
 Fiends! beasts! devils!

* * * * *

What! good sisters? wherefore
 crowd ye to my cell?
 Nay, not sick. What screams? I called not—(only
 somewhat loud in prayer)
 Watch and pray for by temptation ev'n the saints
 fall unaware.
 Hell is near us—very near us—I can hear the noise
 of flames—
Omnes Sancti! Omnes Sancti! call the saints by
 all their names.
Virgo virginum præclara! we must pray more than
 we do.¹²
 If we said ten thousand Credo's, thrice those
 thousands were too few.

Dust and sackcloth — deep confessions — matins —
 vespers—penance sore—

Salve, Mater! (loud—pray louder). Break the idols.

Write no more.

Dies iræ, dies illa! sleeping sinners, wake and
 pray.

Day of midnight desolation! light and hope shall
 flee away.

Midnight? Yes. The bell sounds. Harken! Is it
 storm and wind and snow?

Trim your lamps, ye foolish virgins! Go to meet the
 Bridegroom, go.

Tarry not for dawn or cockerow. *I* will lead. He
 knows me best.

Darkness? nay, the lamps are lighted. Cold? a
 fire is in my breast.

(Bridegroom, come by all compassion! Come with
 pardon flowing sweet.

Long we've watched and wept and waited in the
 house o' the Paraclete.

I have drunk the bitter waters. Through the
floods alone I passed.)

Shout and sing, make joy and music; see, see
there, he comes at last.

“Write no more!”—that voice! O sisters, pray
again for mercy, pray.

Who comes from St. Gildas’ Abbey, clothed in
monkish garments gray?

Not my Spouse, my own, my loved one! (*he may*
come not to this door.)

Sisters, ’tis the Mocker—Satan—crying always *Write*
no more.

Call the saints, apostles, martyrs! Make the blessed
signs with me.

* * * * *

Run for oil! The lamps are darkened!

Miserere, Domine!

NOTES TO ELOISA.

1. *Lord, when prostrate at Thine altars, &c.*

I continually think of you. I constantly call to mind that day when you bestowed on me the first marks of your tenderness. In this condition, O Lord, if I run to prostrate myself before thy altars, if I beseech thee to pity me, why does not the pure flame of thy spirit consume the sacrifice that is offered to thee?

ABELARD TO ELOISA.

2. *love like ours is hard to kill, &c.*

O vows! O convent! I have not lost my humanity under your inexorable discipline. You have not made me marble by changing my habit.

ELOISA TO ABELARD.

Since I have been shut up within these walls, I have done nothing but weep for our misfortunes. This cloister has resounded with my cries. *ibid.*

Even here I love you as much as ever I did in the world. *ibid.*

Among the heroic supporters of the cross, I am a poor slave to a human passion; at the head of a religious community, I am devoted to Abelard only. *ibid.*

Your letters have indeed moved me. I could not read with indifference characters wrote by that dear hand. I sigh, I weep, and all my reason is scarce sufficient to conceal my weakness from my pupils.

ABELARD TO ELOISA.

And yet are we so weak that we cannot now help writing to each other covered as we are with sackcloth and ashes.

ibid.

3. *Write no more, for God forbids it, &c.*

Write no more to me, Eloisa ; write no more to me.

ABELARD TO ELOISA.

May the idea of your loving Abelard always present to your mind be changed into the image of Abelard truly penitent, and may you shed as many tears for your salvation, as you have done during the course of our misfortunes.

ibid.

4. *hast Thou joy to hear us moan ? &c.*

When I am distracted and raving (if I dare say it) even against Heaven itself, I shall not soften it by my prayers, but rather provoke it by my cries and reproaches !

ELOISA TO ABELARD.

5. *Come and sing the happy love-songs, &c.*

With what ease did you compose verses ! The smallest song, nay the least sketch of anything you made for me had a thousand beauties capable of making it last as long as there are love or lovers in the world.

ELOISA TO ABELARD.

6. *Ere your flesh was worn with fasting, &c.*

If you could see me here with my meager face and melancholy air, surrounded with numbers of persecuting monks, who are alarmed at my reputation for learning, and offended at my lean visage, what would you say of my base sighs, which deceive these credulous men? Alas! I am humbled under love and not under the cross.

ABELARD TO ELOISA.

7. *Ere the seafoam smote the convent-windows in your wild Bretagne.*

The duke of Bretagne, informed of my misfortunes, named me to the abbey of St. Gildas, where I now am, and where I suffer every day fresh persecutions. I live in a barbarous country, the language of which I do not understand; I have no conversation but with the rudest people. My walks are on the inaccessible shore of a sea, which is perpetually stormy. Could you see the abbey, Philintus, you would not call it one. The doors and walls are without any ornament, except the heads of wild boars and hinds' feet with the hides of frightful animals which are nailed up against them.

ABELARD TO PHILINTUS.

[The abbey of St. Gildas is seated upon a rock, which the sea beats with its waves.]

8. *Till your voice drowns all the chanting, &c.*

Even into holy places before the altar, I carry with me the memory of our loves.

ELOISA TO ABELARD.

9. *And I feel your arms close round me, &c.*

I think I am still with my dear Abelard. I see him, I speak to him and hear him answer.

ELOISA TO ABELARD.

10. *Then my tears like rivers flow.*

I am here, I confess, a sinner—but one who far from weeping for her sins weeps only for her lover.

ELOISA TO ABELARD.

11. *But the nuns think, &c.*

All who are about me admire my virtue, but could their eyes penetrate into my heart, what would they not discover?

ELOISA TO ABELARD.

12. *we must pray more than we do, &c.*

With my heart full of the love of man I exhort them at least to love only God.

ELOISA TO ABELARD.

THE
DAUGHTER OF MYCERINUS.

Daughter of princes, awake! We have brought
thee again to the sunshine.

Sad were thy kin on the day when thou enter'dst
the chamber of darkness,

Putting the wine-cup away from thy lips, and for-
bidding the music,

Dropping thy timbrel to earth, and forgetting the
face of thy parents.

Daughter of princes, awake! Come forth from the
house of thy bondage.

Come from the desolate place, from the land of the
stranger and exile.

Long hath the ibis returned, and the river for joy
of her coming

Covers the shores with its waves and the noise of
abundance of waters.

Come thyself with the Spring, with the flow of the
Nile, with the ibis !

Hast thou no memory now of the palm and pome-
granate and lotus ?

Lift up thine eyes ; on the river-banks the papyrus
and bulrush

Whisper their joy to the wind, and are bending
their heads to his bidding.

Fowls are abroad in the air ; they have builded a
nest in the fig-tree.

Still in the reedy fens as of old the herons are
wading.

Daughter of princes, awake ! Come forth in the
steps of thy beauty.

Come with the bloom on thy lip, and the smile on
thy cheek, and the sunlight.

Call to thy maidens again; they shall leap at thy
voice to obey thee.

Take up thy harp once more, the harp which is
bush'd in the palace.

Smite all the dirges away from its chords, and
reviving its gladness,

Lead us again in the dance, in the song, in the
feast, in the music.

Daughter of princes, again to the chamber of
shadow we bear thee.

Slowly we move in the march to the sound of the
dulcimer's wailing.

Night with her gentle step is at hand, the bringer
of darkness,

Mother of stars and dews, and the giver of sleep
and of silence.

Sleep, unafraid. All night a lamp is burning beside
thee.

All day long is thy chamber filled with the odour
of incense.

Sleep. May Osiris himself, the Immortal, the lover
of mercy,

Send thee the light of his smile to illumine the
gloom of thy dwelling,
Wiping the tears from thine eyes, and investing
thy slumber with visions
Sweeter than spices and myrrh, or balm from the
valleys of Edom.

[And Mycerinus, the son of Cheops, reigned next over
Egypt . . . and was of all their kings the most just.
. . . And upon Mycerinus, who was thus indulgent to
his subjects, misfortunes began to come; and the first of
these was the death of his own daughter, the only child
which he had.

And he was afflicted beyond measure at the blow which
fell upon him, and he desired to bury his daughter more
sumptuously than others are buried.

He therefore built a hollow wooden image of an heifer,
and having covered it over with gold, he buried within it,
his daughter who had died.

Now the heifer was not hidden in the earth, but it is
shown to this day, and I have seen it myself. It is kept in the
city of Sais, and lies in the royal palace there, in a chamber
very curiously ornamented. And they burn all manner of
incense beside it, the whole day long. And every night a
lamp is kept lighted all through the night.

And the heifer is hidden with a purple cloth, except the head and neck which are seen, and which are covered over with gold of extraordinary thickness. And an imitation of the sun's orb made of gold is placed between the horns.

The heifer is not standing, but rests on its knees, and its size is that of a living one.

And every year it is carried out of the chamber. When the Ægyptians beat themselves for that god, whom I dare not now name, then they also carry the image of the heifer out to the light.

For they say that the daughter herself, when she lay a-dying, prayed this boon from her father, Mycerinus, that once in every year they would allow her to see the sun.

HERODOTUS, lib. ii., cap. 129—132.]

ICHABOD.

On broad fields of death and slaughter looked the
 setting sun that day,
But forsook not one small chamber, where a sweet
 life ebb'd away.
Not by age or suffering wasted—only human love
 and bliss
Lead her through the gates of sorrow to so dark
 a doom as this.
Ended now the child-birth labour: quenched those
 shooting darts of pain,
And a mist resembling slumber rests upon her
 wandering brain.

Round her bed the women weeping oft have said,
her soul to cheer :

“You have borne a son ; ’tis over ; let your heart
no longer fear.”

But she moved not, nor regarded, nor that infant’s
cry forbids :

Not a word she spake in answer—lifted not her
clouded lids.

Through the gate, outside the city, still in thought
she seemed to go,

Gazed upon a face of marble, smoothing back the
hair of snow ;

Aged eyes which death has darkened, long by
watching dimmed, and tears !

Head which sleeps beneath the burden of its eight-
and-ninety years !

Then a horror swims before her—clash of arms and
battle strife,

And one corpse amid the carnage, dearer than all
else in life.

“Oh my husband ! *I* can help you. Tell your
darling of the pain.

Only look not so, I pray you! Kiss me! Love
me! Speak again!"

Gone!—and not a word of parting, or of blessing
which she could

Day and night repeat for comfort all the years of
widowhood.

Suddenly the dream is broken, by a feeble wail
pierced through,

And a baby's face was pressing close (so close!)
to hers she knew.

'Tis *his* son and thine entreats thee! Thine and
his that soft warm breath

Would recall thy failing spirit from the very arms
of death!

With her eyes she looked a welcome—but the
tears were fain to flow—

Tried to kiss the face which never else a parent's
kiss could know.

And with faintest gasps she murmured: "Call
him—call him—Ichabod—

For the glory—all—departed—father—husband—ark
of God!"

SUICIDE IN DURHAM GAOL.

AUTUMN ASSIZES, 1883.

'Twas one act of maddened fury born of vengeful
rage and strife,

And the felon hears his sentence, *Penal servitude
for life.*

Life with all its dreary winters, but without one
hope of spring !

Surely death's long tranquil slumber were a sweeter
holier thing.

So thought he, for when the warder came to call
the man next day,

Death, self-sought, had brought him pardon in
the twilight cold and grey.

What a sudden calm has touched him !—him with
soul one blaze of wrath,

Slave to fiercest hate and passion — fiends and
demons in his path !

Fellow-man, I come to greet you ;—so, despite
men's wants and sins,

When despair is worst and deepest, mercy's healing
work begins.

Quenched is all your thirst for vengeance--all your
feverish struggle done—

Judge and Jury—home and children—hate and
love—are all as one.

Speak not when the gaoler calls you. Stir not in
your narrow cell.

Rest, perplexed and broken spirit. If you sleep,
you shall do well.

You my lord, too, wise and famous, throned on
judgment's highest seat,

Title-honoured, wrapped in ermine—you too, fellow-
man I greet.

Did you weigh this man's temptation, make his
bitter case your own,

Ere you doomed him to a darkness which could
end with life alone?

You may talk of acts and statutes, but small
blessing comes, I fear,

On the souls to iron hardened which disdain the
suppliant's tear.

What avails your pomp and learning, and these
lawyers' flattering tones?

Those who crush the wronged and suffering, God
despises and disowns

Let not brutal-hearted vengeance in the place of
judgment dwell.

Kindle not the torch of justice at the fiery flames
of hell.

Smite no more dumb men and brothers with the
tyrant's cursèd rod.

Let compassion mix with justice, love of man with
fear of God.

WILLIAM PEPPER,

(MURDERED AT SEA, DECEMBER, 1881, AND JANUARY,
1882.)

Nought around save brutal tyrants—winter skies
and winter sea—

Yet he cried in deepest anguish : “God in heaven
look down on me.”

Fearful cry for mouths of children in this human
world to make,

Where the dear Christ through the ages suffers for
our human sake !

Tortured on the very morning of the blessed
Christmas time,

Tortured when on shore the church-bells rang the
“Happy New Year” chime.

Beaten in the very death-pang, when with wild-
stretched arms he seeks
For his mother to come near him and to kiss his
sunken cheeks.

Cursèd be the hireling lawyers, who the murderers'
cause could plead.

Cursèd be the law of England, which two guilty
demons freed.

Yet strong hands were clenched in anger—stoutest
hearts were roughly stirred—

Tears were shed by winter firesides when the fearful
tale was heard.

Dear my child, my son, my brother, could we find
your ocean-bed—

Bring to land your stone-bruised body, lying silent
there and dead—

(Tender in its naked softness, but with frightful
scars to see,

And a look of piercing terror which in young eyes
should not be)

We should close those eyes and kiss them, fold the
hands and smooth the hair,

And with scalding tears of sorrow bathe those poor
limbs, swoll'n and bare.

Let none say such grief avails not, and such pity
useless call ;

Love is never never wasted in a world which needs
it all.

When we learn what fellow-creatures, weaker than
ourselves, endure,

Gentler shall we grow with children, kinder to the
sad and poor ;

Hidden springs shall flow of mercy, and the slow
world understand,

That the martyrs still are with us, as long since
in Holy Land.

THE FIRST WIFE.

Soon after my second marriage, I thought one night
in my sleep,

That I saw the wife I had buried, in the grave
where she lay so deep.

She never stirred to meet me, nor moved her head
in its place,

But I saw her features working, and the tears
came down her face.

She was not angry, nor blamed me, but between
her sobs she said :

“I’m glad—you’re happy—it’s better—far better—
you should be wed.”

Then I spoke to her: "Annie, my darling, you
mustn't, you mustn't cry so.

I always loved you, my darling, I always loved you,
you know.

If ever I spoke unkindly, forgive me, my darling,
do.

I don't know what I was made of to be unkind to
you.

I'm making the fondest of fathers to the precious
babes you bore,

And they're growing so good, my darling, you
mustn't cry any more.

Little Robin has not forgot you, (but Mary, you
know, was small)

In his prayer he prays always for 'mother,' and
'send her back quick to us all.'

If he gets a new frock or a plaything, or they
dress him up tidy and clean,

He says 'that's because mother is coming, so they
must make him fit to be seen'

Then 'will she come soon after breakfast,' or 'won't
she come long before tea?

Just the same same mother as always and take us
again on her knee?

And I'll show her my horse and my engine and I'll
ask her the right way to play.

Because all of our games have seemed different,
'while mother's been keeping away.'

And he talks of the last walk you took him when
I met you that time at the gate—

You were wearied with stooping for daisies. (I'm
sorry I came so late).

'Be quiet, be quiet, now, Annie; I never could
bear you to cry;

And I wept like a child, my darling, that day
when I saw you die.

You tried so hard to say something and you clung
so to my hand,

And you gazed and gazed, but 'kiss me' was all I
could understand.

And I never ceased to kiss you, and your eyes
seemed so to plead,

Till I saw that you didn't know me—then I knew
you were dead indeed.

And some one came in for the children—you used
never to want them to go—

But my darling, I couldn't bear them to see you
lying so ;

I couldn't have watched them climbing to get up
and pat your cheek,

And calling you 'mother' and 'mother'—and you
there never to speak !

And the neighbours came in talking, but I heard
not what they said.

I only knew my darling, my darling, that you
were dead.

And we laid such flowers about you, and before
they fastened the lid,

I kissed and kissed and kissed you, my darling,
indeed I did."

She thought her sobs grew calmer and calmer and
died away ;

But the sorrowful vision lingered in my thoughts
for many a day.

COMRADES.

Spirit with your thirst unslakèd,
Earnest heart, laid bare and naked,
Comrade, from the first I knew you.
Take the kiss which I give to you.

•
Time is ours. Come forth and wander
Through the world, the sweet world yonder.
All the mountains stretch before us.
All the rivers sing in chorus.
All the trees, their joy expressing,
Wave their full arms, wide with blessing.
Homeward comes the silent reaper ;
Uttered thought grows calm and deeper.
Whilst around the shadows darken,
I will speak and you shall hearken.

Dream no more in any fashion
That our hearts so hot with passion,
When we're graver, wearier, older,
Must to lifeless ashes smoulder,
Nothing left but dust and embers,
(Though the soul—the soul—remembers.)
Thought I thus, I would not cherish
Froth-like hopes ; they now might perish.
But my creed is, all endeavour
Bears a fruit which blooms for ever :
And each mystic warm emotion
Hath some source, deep as the ocean,
High as all the heavens above us—
Those sweet heavens, which know and love us.

Was it truth we urged and pleaded—
Truth desired not and unheeded ?
Was it tyrant-wrong which stirred us—
Crying loud though no one heard us ?
Was it love—the heavenly vision—
Chilled by failure and derision ?
(Not the less divine and saving
For the pains of want and craving).

These our longings shall be sated—
We who loved and dreamed and waited—
We who called, persuaded, beckoned,
When the jewels shall be reckoned.

Therefore show me, unforbidden,
Secrets from the cold world hidden.
Be my friend, companion, brother;
Let us love and trust each other.
What I give is worth bestowing;
What I teach deserves your knowing;
Are there struggles, strivings, yearnings,
Loss of heart and hope, soul burnings?—
Comrade, by these signs I knew you.
Take the kiss which I give to you.

THE CAVERN.

The tide the cavern's mouth has left,
The seaweed strews the sands,
And through the narrow wave-worn cleft
I grope on knees and hands.

For vanished foot-prints here I trace
And memory glows and burns ;
I will not leave the enchanted place
Till the slow tide returns.

I count each dark recess and nook
Your eyes that morning scanned ;
All round the dear grey walls I look,
And feel them with my hand.

I stir the pebbles with my feet,
I watch the blue waves roll,
And oft your blessed words repeat
And tell them to my soul.

Till slowly this familiar spot
A haunted cave is grown,
By other feet forsaken not—
I seem no more alone.

I stoop to catch a whispering sound,
Calm as some hermit's hymn ;
I wonder what is changed around,
And why my eyes grow dim.

These empty arms I almost raise
Your sweet face to earess,
And how my head like one who prays
For your dear hands to bless.

No more I marvel how those tides
Flow on with ceaseless change ;
The secrets which the ocean hides,
No more to me are strange.

Dim worlds move through the skies above :

Deep wonders fill the sea :

But nothing is as strange as Love,

The one, vast mystery.

THE PORTRAIT.

A picture hangs upon my wall.

I knew her years ago—so now
(Before my day's work) will recall,
If it be like, her lips and brow.

'Tis well all anger long is dead.

No bitterness is left nor pain.
And yet, methinks, when all is said,
The years —the lonely years—remain.

I also dreamed that if the heart

Could utter but one passionate cry,
Two souls would meet, that once did part,
And go together—live or die.

Dream foolish, and vain fancies all,

Amid life's work soon put away,
And yet still haugs upon the wall

That old, old picture Let it stay.

CURFEWTIDE.

I dreamed Death called me, and I smiled
To hear so sweet a voice, and rose,
And took his hand, as doth a child
Who with his strongest brother goes.

And through the quiet roads we went,
And all who met us, stood and cried :
“Trust not the stranger” but content
I heeded nothing nor replied.

Then whispers gathered on the breeze
To warn me, but I cared not what ;
And the birds shouted from the trees :
“’Tis Death !” But I believed them not.

“Thy face is beautiful and sweet,
O gentle comrade ! but thine hand
Trembles a little, and thy feet
Are bruised with journeying through the land.

“Yet rest not. Lead me far away
O'er the wide moor and wold and hill ;
Through glen and forest all the day
Further and further lead me still.

“Only when curfew sounds, and gloom
Hides the long road with shadows deep,
Find me some lodging-place and room
Where pilgrims (tired as I) may sleep.”

He answered not by simple words.
But into strange wild chant he broke—
Now soft as song of far-off birds—
Now loud as though the tempest spoke.

Till all my soul grew slowly strong,
And to my mind a blessed calm
Came from the pathos of his song,
And from the pressure of his palm.

And wrapped in thought, I never heard
The bees among the fragrant vines,
Nor sound of soothing winds which stirred
The sombre shadows of the pines.

Nor marked I, when the daylight sank,
How heaven and earth waxed pale and dim—
So deeply from his song I drank,
So full of peace I walked with him.

And when at last he ceased, 'twas grown
Too dark in any wise to see
The hand still trembling in mine own,
The lips which sang no more to me.

But as we blindly walked, behold !
A clear light in the distance gleamed,
And all at once the curfew tolled.
“They call me to my home” I dreamed.

“I love thee, whosoe'er thou art,
Dear comrade, who hast melted thus
The bitterness which vexed my heart.”
(And still the curfew called for us.)

“ Kiss me with kisses on my cheek
And both my lips, and let me place
Mine arms around thee, whilst I speak,
And lay thine hands about my face.

“ Whether that same bright beacon glow
From some brave city filled with men
And throbbing lives—or only show
Some sweet lone dwelling in the glen—

“ Sing softly !—one gray roof and tiles—
Stone walls and porch and half-latched door—
Windows *who* watches? what face smiles?
. . . (So dark a valley !) Sing once more.

“ The river bathes our bruised feet ;
And just beyond the low gate stands.
The shallow ford is cool and sweet.
(What love does !) Give me both thine hands.

“ Sing softly. We shall rest anon,
Nor wander more o'er wold and hill.
Oh sing then ! ” But my guide was gone,
And when I woke, I called him still.

DAYBREAK.

The sounds of early morning break
 Upon my too long slumbering ear.
I will no longer sleep, but wake,
 And talk with thee, for thou art here.

The roads we climbed were rough and long.
 The solitary hills were steep.
The birds filled all the woods with song.
 After such toil 'twas well to sleep.

The house is strange—the friends unknown—
 Yet know we each the other best;
For me—I know but thee alone,
 And thou wilt teach me all the rest.

Yes, brother, search and thou shalt find

About my heart no thought of pain—

No trace of sorrow in my mind :

Nor shall I grieve thee, dear, again.

THE LAST DREAM.

Give me no signs when I must die—

No warning ; (how could I prepare?)

With step unheard, O Death, draw nigh,

Come (when thou comest) unaware.

Speak to me softly till the end,

Of mortal flesh, of human ties,

Of smiles, of kisses from my friend,

Faces I love, and lips and eyes.

As daylight steals from skies above,

Let me to gradual slumber fall,

So dreaming of the things I love,

As waking, to remember all.

ON THE BORDERS.

THE FAIRIES' GLEN AT MELROSE.

A morning in spring ! and the glory
Of rivers which seawards run !
A joy in the glade and the woodland !
The lifting of leaves to the sun !

And birds in the branches are singing
As gaily as ever they can :
And what do you want in our forest,
You lonely and sorrowful man ?

“I have wandered in shadow and tempest ;
The skies have been clouded and gray :
Sing on, little birds, in the sunshine ;
The winter is past and away.”

DRYBURGH.

We waded through the rushing Tweed,
Nought better could content us ;
It seemed to grow in depth and speed,
On purpose to prevent us.

It comes back like some pleasant dream,
We're never long forgetting ;
How vain our hopes to cross the stream
With neither fall nor wetting ;

With what light wings and mocking tones
Swallow skimmed past and plover ;
How sharp the edges of the stones
Our naked feet walked over ;

How glad we reached the soft green bank,
Safe after all our slipping ;
Down on the warm dry grass we sank,
Bare-legged and garments dripping.

With merry sounds all Dryburgh rang,
The broad Tweed flowed before us,
And long we lay, and loud we sang,
Both in and out of chorus.

'Mid crowded streets I still can smile
On times like these to ponder,
In far sweet places for a while
Can lose my way and wander.

Discover still, O joyous lark,
Blue depths beyond our gazing,
Seek low green nooks in Ancrum Park
Where timid deer are grazing.

I know the gleaming trout will leap,
Whilst I in towns am dwelling ;
The river, if I wake or sleep,
Its dreamy tale is telling.

The Kaeside squirrel in the tree
From branch to branch is darting—
What were those words you said to me,
Those fervent words at parting?

Bright things are slow to die—O friend,
So much my thoughts possessing,
Hid in these idle rhymes, I send
My love and thanks and blessing.

COLDSTREAM.

I see no changes since the day
When through this land came you and I.
I almost wish the woods would lay
Their greenness and their glory by.

Methinks I hear the selfsame bird
Which sang that day on yonder bough—
And not a single leaf seems stirred.
'Twas April then. 'Tis April now.

'Twas also Easter. Long we walked.
In deepening gloom the village lay.
Our hearts were softened as we talked,
And burned within us by the way.

To me this road is hallowed ground,
And mixed with thoughts of life and death,
And Coldstream hath a sacred sound,
Like Bethlehem or Nazareth.

THE JED.

From Otterburn I journeyed forth,
And crossed the Border range,
Descending where the road ran north
Through places new and strange.

There pleasant fields and woods were seen ;
The bleak bare hills were gone.
At nightfall glimmering through the green
The lights of Jedburgh shone.

The morrow, when the fresh dawn glowed
On Carter Fell's high ridge,
I wandered where the wild Jed flowed,
Ever towards Jedfoot Bridge.

The sun in its broad heavens did shine.

The wind did softly play,
As though some messenger divine
Were breathing round my way.

I dreamed of faces dear to me,
Till on deep trance I fell.
Close by my side they seemed to be,
Those whom I love so well.

They came in old familiar style.
They called me, one by one.
They hailed me, each with shout and smile,
As they had always done.

The friends and comrades whom I love,
Their hands in mine they laid.
And still the same heavens shone above,
The same wind softly played.

We talked about the rushing Jed,
The gentle thoughts it brings,
Its grassy shore, its shallow bed,
The lonely song it sings.

We wondered when it all began,
When that sweet cry first came,
And if, before the days of man
Its song was still the same.

Perchance in some hushed twilight dim,
These hills with echoes rang,
And all the listening seraphim
Shouted for joy and sang.

The dreary earth took heart and smiled,
(And flowers and leaves were seen)
And spread soft grass to please her child
And keep its pathway green.

All beauty in this sweet world found
To our own souls bears kin,
And echoes of Earth's voices sound
From deeper worlds within.

So, ere we knew, our talk forsooth
Flowed into tenderer themes :—
The burnings of our hearts of youth ;
Our passions and our dreams ;

The pathos of our daily strife ;
The trust of friend in friend ;
The mysteries of Thought and Life ;
The darkness of the end.

Thus, waxing warmer, on we talked
Till slowly I was 'ware
That one more dear companion walked
With us in silence there.

The fervent love of youth is strong ;
And if I kissed his face,
And if I held him somewhat long,
(Too long) in my embrace ;—

If close my heart on his I leaned,
It was for fancies dim,
That great wide years had intervened
Since last I walked with him.

O daylight visions which beset
So much my thoughtful way,
Pray you, come oftener to me yet,
And longer with me stay.

Life to the frozen lips impart,
Sweet fragrance to the dust,
And wake all memories in my heart
Of kindness and of trust !

And you, pure souls, in prayers immersed,
Chide not my tender dream,
Because the draught which heals my thirst
Flows from an earthly stream.

Is Earth all mortal? (Whilst I muse,
The kindled flame grows hot.)
Suffer me still its love to choose.
Pray you, forbid me not.

For since all thought of heaven (with me)
From human love first came,
I mix "the greatest of these three"
With "Hallowed be Thy Name!"

THE BOWMONT.

In the midst of a lone, deep valley,
 With the Cheviots heaped round high,
I heard the Bowmont rushing,
 With a loud and troubled cry.

A few stray, wandering swallows
 Were haunting its noisy shore,
And their fitful notes kept mingling
 With the hoarse stream's endless roar,

Till I fancied the birds' soft music
 Did answer the restless tide.
"What ails you, and what are you seeking,
 O river?" I thought they cried.

“You have come from the heart of the mountains ;
They are vast, and wild, and drear ;
No wonder your life is lonely,
And your voice so sad to hear.

“Kirk Yetholm is close beside you,
You can almost hear its chimes—
Half stands in a broad, green valley,
And half up the steep hill climbs.

“You must flow through that merry village,
Leave, leave this place so lone,
You must sing to the gipsy children,
In a cheerier, happier tone.

“Then away you must wind to the northward,
Then eastwards and loiter along,
Till the Colledge comes down to join you,
All smiling, and full of song.

“It was born in the same wild regions,
But your paths have been wide apart ;
You must meet it with shouts of welcome,
And singing, and blithe of heart.

“Telling many a tale of the mountains,
Of Cold Law or Windy Gyle,
You may prattle like gleesome children,
And wander together a while.

“Then the sweet calm Till shall take you
Through a land all fair and green,
Where armies and old-world battles
In long-gone times were seen :

“Through Flodden and Ford, to Tillmouth,
Where the Tweed’s dark waters flow,
At times like a rushing torrent,
And stately at times, and slow.

“Past many a smiling village,
We have watched it calmly glide ;
There are castles and ancient abbeys
Look out on its brimming tide.

“It has been, too, in lonely places—
(Cease, cease that mournful song),
It will bear you to Twizell and Norham ;
It is brave, and grand, and strong.

“It will open its arms to receive you ;
It will clasp you to its breast.
You are lonely and sad and troubled—
To live and love is best.”

Then I woke from my wayward musings ;
It was fancy alone had heard
A song with a human meaning
From the throat of a wandering bird.

What voice or speech had the echoes
Which loud through the wild glen rang ?
It was only a river that murmured—
Only some swallows sang.

THE TWEED.

I mused thus with myself, and talked,
In tranquil mood and free,
As from fair Kelso's town I walked
To Berwick by the sea :

“I will not take the rugged way
To Yetholm lone and high,
Nor shall I seek the fields to-day,
Which round sweet Jeddart lie.

“I hear the rushing of the Tweed,
I watch its waters glide,
I follow where its footsteps lead
On to the ocean wide.

“The river winding to the sea
 Broader and deeper grows,
And every little brook is free
 To join it as it flows.

“So, in my spirit every day,
 Love more and more expands,
And leads me on my pilgrim way
 Through green and sunny lands.

“Methinks no blessing comes to man,
 Though boundless as the sea,
Nor hath done, since the world began,
 But also comes to me.

“I walk the earth without one fear
 To mar my peace complete,
And every human joy is dear,
 Each human hope is sweet.

“And more and more my kindred race
 I love and understand ;
I gaze into a brother's face ;
 I clasp a comrade's hand.

“The human voice my soul doth thrill ;
I lay my whole heart bare,
That they may see my thoughts who will,
My inmost secrets there.

“The radiance of a gentle life
Will joy to others spread,
Because ambition’s foolish strife,
Envy and pride are dead.

“Because the warm heart’s warmth alone
The hopeless spirit cheers,
And, though I shed none of my own,
Will dry another’s tears.”

* * * * *

Old Duddo on the right I passed,
Saw Norham worn and grey ;
The red tiles of the town at last
Beneath the steep slope lay.

Behind me, like a vision blest,
Stretch’d fair broad lands in view,
And far, far in the glimmering west
The Eildon hills I knew.

The Eildons faded in the sky ;
Night fell ; the sun was gone,
But in my heart it could not die,
Its red light lingered on.

I cared not how the gloom increased,
How grey the heavens had grown ;
The world was darkest in the east,
Whither I walk'd alone.

“My path lies dim ; but all the same,
Bright dawns,” I said, “shall be,”
And like a full, deep answer, came
The great voice of the sea.

KIRK YETHOLM.

As I rambled around Kirk Yetholm,
Ere the evening shades came down,
I met with three cheerful natives
Of the quaint old thatch-roofed town.

We talked of the view from the mountains,
How the ocean is seen quite plain,
And yon clump of trees was in England,
But the rest was all Scotland again.

It were easier climbing the Storrheugh
In the heat of a summer's day,
Than pronouncing its name, as they gave it
In the proper native way.

We stopped at the small white cottage,
Where the Queen of the Gipsies dwelt;
As I gazed on her wrinkled features,
Half pity, half awe, I felt;—

To think that this restless people,
This tribe of mysterious birth,
Like a remnant of ages forgotten,
Should be wandering still on the earth.

Then we raced down the hill to the kirkyard,
And peeped through the iron door,
And a green path led to the valley
And the Bowmont's pebbly shore.

Then ho! for a bathe in the river!
What mattered the time and the clock?
The late evening air made us shiver,
And the plunge was a horrible shock.

But with well-counterfeited enjoyment
We floundered and floated and swam;
When I said it was warm and delicious,
I'm afraid I was telling a cram.

And when ended our feats of natation,

 'Twas a difficult task to revive

The longed-for and lost circulation

 Which took its own time to arrive.

Then with spirits renewed and fresh vigour,

 We laughed and we shouted and sang,

Till the clump of trees in old England

 With the clamourous echoes rang.

And away to the town in the gloaming

 We set off with joyous strides :

Through the field where the cloth lay bleaching,

 Past the mill went my merry guides.

And the darkness gathered and gathered,

 And silenced each noisy tongue,

And the light from the school-house glimmered

 So faintly the trees among.

And the breath of the hills descended

 And stirred in the grass at our feet,

And the branches above moved softly,

 And the river sang low and sweet.

Till a power in the darkness thrilled me,
And I felt and I understood
How it passes all comprehension—
Our mysterious brotherhood :

The same love for the fields and the mountains
And the rush of the cooling streams ;
The same fervour of youth with its laughter
And the warmth of its rosy dreams :

And the deep deep human yearning
In all human breasts concealed
Was expressed in part by our silence,
And in part by our words revealed.

Till I wondered (but only a moment)
If ever there would be room
In my soul which so loves existence
For sorrow or sadness or gloom.

But I ended as usual by saying
That whatever might be the truth,
All the days of my life I would cherish
The hopes and the dreams of youth.

ELSIE SHAW.

I.

It was all in sweet Kirk Yetholm
 (The roofs are thatched with straw),
And alone with her gipsy mother,
 Lived the little Elsie Shaw.

She lived in that row of houses
 Which is built on the kirkyard bound,
Where the low back-windows open
 Scarce a foot from the kirkyard ground.

The road in the front of their cottage
 Leads straight through the village-green,
And away to the Cheviot mountains,
 Where a world of hills is seen.

But behind the sloping kirkyard,
The valley spreads broad and fair,
And the wandering Bowmont water
With a murmur of song flows there.

On the other side of the river,
Just over the bridge of stone,
That's the village they call Town Yetholm,
Where the smoke through the trees is shown.

It was there lived Willy Laidlaw,
The weaver's apprentice bold,
Who so often to little Elsie
The love in his heart had told.

And merry would ring the kirk bells
(He had vowed it many a day),
When the light grew long in summer,
And they mowed the summer hay.

Then up spake Willy's father,
With wrathful words and wild :
" Ye shall wed no little Elsie,
And no gipsy woman's child."

And slow spake Willie Laidlaw,

(His heart within was sore)

“If I lose my little Elsie

I must see her face no more.

“I shall ne’er come back to Scotland,

I will sail across the sea,

Though Elsie should find a new love,

And forget her love for me.”

II.

It was all in sweet Kirk Yetholm

(The roofs are thatched with straw)

And awake at night in her chamber

Lay the little Elsie Shaw.

She had waited and watched in the gloaming,

Since the last song of the lark,

Till the valley grew dim and silent

And the roads and the fields grew dark.

The lights had gone out in the village,

She had heard the closing door,

And in her heart had murmured :

“Willy Laidlaw will come no more.”

And now, through the open window,
As she lay in her chamber small,
She heard strange whispers passing
Through the rocking elm trees tall.

All hidden away in the darkness,
The river so softly cried :
“It is long till to-morrow’s gloaming,
And the waiting is sore to bide.”

And far down the sleeping valley
The echoes replied in song :
“But love is to-day’s and to-morrow’s,
Though the waiting be sore and long.”

There came three seagulls flying
Through the window to her bed :
“We have seen your true love, Elsie,
You must weep no more,” they said.

“To-morrow by old Ford Castle,
Where Flodden’s fields smile gay,
If you stand by the gate, we shall see you,
And guide you the wearisome way.”

Then up rose little Elsie,
Ere ever the cock had crowed,
And away down the Bowmont valley,
Where the Bowmont water flowed.

Ere ever she came to Mindrum
The light broke faint and gray,
Ere ever she came to Crookham,
It was the morning day.

She left the road at Crookham
And trod the soft greensward,
She crossed the Till at Etal,
She followed the Till to Ford.

She stood by old Ford Castle,
(And Flodden's fields smiled gay),
There came three seagulls flying,
To guide her the wearisome way.

She travelled uphill to Barmoor,
(The sea-gulls flew before),
Through Lowick and Beal she wandered,
Till she came to the great sea-shore.

Across three miles of ocean,
Old Holy Island stands,
But the ebb-tide had left only
Three miles of flat wet sands.

The seagulls skimmed across them.
She followed and would not stay,
Till she came where Willy Laidlaw
Asleep on the wet sands lay.

Oh! it's "Willy, pray you waken,
And come with Elsie home.
Do you see the dark black waters,
And the white streaks of the foam?"

"I only see my true love,
I see her glad and fair,
And they twine white wreaths of lilies
In the locks of her dark black hair.

"She is walking through the valley,
And the lilies bloom so white,
But we part till to-morrow's gloaming.
It is late, and dark. Good night."

Oh ! it's "Willy, pray you waken,
And listen close with me,
You will hear the rush of breakers,
And the sound of the rising sea."

"I only hear the Bowmont,
I hear as in a dream,
And the birds shout down the valley
All by the murmuring stream.

"I only see the Cheviots,
I see them as in sleep,
And making long, far echoes
Comes the soft cry of the sheep.

"There is singing in the school-house,
There is laughter from the mill,
And I hear the reapers' voices
From the farmstead on the hill."

Oh ! it's "Willy, pray you waken,
Your heart is cold as stone,
And your sweet young lips seem frozen
When I press them with my own."

“The summer sun is blazing,
The summer hay smells sweet,
There are daisies and grass and clover
And wild ferns at my feet.

“It is all in sweet Kirk Yetholm,
The roofs are thatched with straw ;
And I stand at the kirk-gate waiting
For my true love, Elsie Shaw.

“It is ho ! for the gipsy wedding,
And the gipsy town is gay,
And the merry kirk-bells ring near me,
And the river sings far away.”

III.

It was all in sweet Kirk Yetholm
(The roofs were thatched with straw)
And it was the village joiner
With hammer, and planks, and saw.

It was the village sexton,
And he digged so straight and neat,
And the robins sang as they watched him,
And the smell of the hay was sweet.

The robins sang in the elm tree,
And he digged so straight and wide,
That two might have room for resting
In their love-sleep side by side.

Close up to the wall of the houses,
Close under the windows small,—
There were daisies and grass and clover,
And the blue skies over all.

And the river fills all the valley
With verdure, and beauty, and growth,
As life is made tender and fragrant
By the passion of love and troth.

CLOUDS OF THE VALLEY.



I.

PRELUDE.

The sweetness of the flowers of Spring,
The beauty of the dawning light,
Do always haunt your face, and cling
And hover o'er it, day and night.

When Sleep retards my labouring breath,
Not even then is Love forgot.
I scarce would call it Sleep, but Death,
If in my dreams I saw you not.

II.

TRUST.

My soul is strengthened, when I mark
The boundless faith you hold in me ;—
If all my way of life grew dark,
Blighted and shamed, in days to be ;—

You still would see with quenchless trust
Green life beneath eternal snows,
And in the crumpled leaves and dust
The earliest beauty of the rose.

III.

WORDS.

Delirious language would be weak
To tell you half the love I bear.
My heart flows in the words I speak,
But the full meaning comes not there.

Yet fear not. Let me kiss again
Those sweet lips as I always do.
My wildest passion holds no stain
To cloud those perfect eyes of blue

IV.

ALWAYS.

The love that glows within my breast,
I sometimes think had scarce been such,
Had you not always so confessed
That you do love me, and how much.

You always lift your heavenly face,
Seeking caresses, when we meet.
The silence of your close embrace
Thrills more than words could—how so sweet.

You always pray me to return,
And wonder why so late I came.
It is the pleading tones that burn.
The words are air. The thoughts are flame.

V.

SOMETIMES.

I sometimes in my foolish way,
When on my bosom you recline
A head which fairer grows each day,
Nestling a tender hand in mine,—

I sometimes, as I smooth your hair,
Kissing the dear white brow the while,
Will softly ask you to declare
That you will never die;—you smile.

No wonder! Who can tell us now
If I this same sweet hand shall hold,
When the long years have marked your brow
And left you gray and worn and old.

VI.

HOW LONG.

Love me not, dear, "till death us part,"

Short union of a fragile life,

Keep me far longer in your heart,

Closer than husband is to wife.

So when our souls have laid aside

This home of flesh, these robes of clay,

The bridegroom still shall know his bride,

And love her in that far-off day.

VII.

FOREBODINGS.

If coldness e'er your love should cross
In days to come, by evil chance—
Oh softly tell me of my loss,
Wake me not rudely from my trance.

A heart, which love like yours has blessed,
Such bitter tidings well might break,
And freeze the gladness in my breast,
And silence all the songs I make.

Unless some few sad notes should flow,
As I have heard in winter wood
Poor birds forsaken in the snow,
But singing all the songs they could.

VIII.

WINTER COME.

I tried to love you not—to drown
All memory of each word and look,
And forth I wandered from the town,
And through strange lands my way I took.

'Twas Autumn with its changing hues,
But here and there were shades of green,
As though the trees were loth to lose
The long sweet summer which had been.

With me, no summer lingered yet.

My heart was withered to the core.
Its only wish was to forget.

I could not—would not—love you more.

The winds came forth with mournful sound.

“The Winter comes” they seemed to say.
Coldness and twilight closed me round.

The skies were dim. The roads were grey.

What matter for the dreary wind,

The moaning woods, the gloomy rain?
A sadder winter filled my mind.

I could not—would not—love again.

IX.

THE VILLAGE.

At nightfall through the little town,
Whither my lonesome path had led,
Forlorn I loitered up and down.
“All Autumn days are sad ” I said.

Lo, music in the marketplace !
I stood and listened as they sang,
And strove behind a careless face
To hide my sorrow's bitter pang.

“Flow on ” I cried, “sweet music flow.
All voices full of song should be,
And heavenly lips still sing, I know,
Which never more shall sing to me.”

Then strange weird fancies crossed my breast.

I almost thought I saw you stand

Listening in silence with the rest,

And lift your face and wave your hand.

X.

THE TORRENT.

I heard a foaming torrent rave
 With endless sound and plunge and fall,
And right beneath its roaring wave
 Stood one great rock unmoved through all.

The tempest thundered o'er its head.
 It cared not how the floods might roll.
And softly to myself I said :
 “Be patient also, O my soul.

“Be calmer in thy deep distress.
 ’Tis not unfitting that the few
Who drain love’s rapture to excess
 Should taste excess of sorrow too.”

XI.

THE STORM.

1.

O spirit of the blast and storm,
Heart of the tempest ! let me be
Dissolved from mortal flesh and form
And changed, and mingled into thee.

The flaming thunderbolts to forge,
To ride the clouds on dusky wing,
To smite the rugged mountain-gorge,
To shake the crags where eagles cling.

And in the tumult and the throe,
The wail along my wasting path,
To find an echo to my wo,
A voice for my consuming wrath.

2.

Soul of the tempest! when is heard

Thy furious challenge from afar,
Are heaven and earth more fiercely stirred
Than we, when passion blinds us, are?

I know my madness. I would fain

Strive to be gentler, smiling on;
But that sweet face returns again,
And all my calmer thoughts are gone.

XII.

THE SUNBEAM.

At times a beam of sunshine falls
Athwart the prisoner's floor of stone,
And smites the gloom from dungeon walls
Where the poor captive toils alone.

So, on my soul enthralled and dumb
Old joys look back and smile anew ;
Delightful thoughts, like dreams, still come :
And all are memories of you.

That prisoner's darkened eyes may fill,
Though steel-nerved lips no murmur make :
His shackles find him hardened still :
His tears were for the sunbeam's sake.

XIII.

THE DARK ROAD.

Oh why, when Love's deep dreams are fled
Because the house of death is strange,
Should we its silent gates so dread,
And tremble at the thought of change—

Whilst they who dwell beneath the sods,
Within the green mound's daisied hem,
Find happy slumber and the clods
Of that dim valley sweet to them ?

Or is it that dark road we fear ?
The hands close held—the lips long kissed—
The pitying faces—disappear,
And voices call us in the mist.

Yet dauntless men of old and brave
Who breathed the dungeon's poisoned breath
With scarce a sigh for freedom, gave
The beauty of their youth to death.

And patient martyrs even wore
Bright faces at the burning stake,
And felt the leaping flames, and bore
And moaned not, for the Master's sake.

And earlier still in heathen lands,
Some took the hemlock's bitter bowl,
Held in the shuddering gaoler's hands
And drank it, undisturbed of soul.

Yet none the less I fear to part
From wearied days of inward strife,
Because a memory fills my heart,
A thought—a life within a life.

Oh wherefore should I dread to cross
The waters of that Lethæan stream?
Behold, a shadow is my loss,
And all my grief is for a dream!

XIV.

OUTPOURINGS.

A dream—a shadow—(let me pour
The torrent of my sorrows wild) :
A face which came, but comes no more :
An image which took breath and smiled :

A joy in days which dawned and died :
A light which on my darkness stole :
A phantom formed to open wide
The gates of passion to my soul :

A footprint on the common road,
Lending its sweetness to the clay :
A deep divineness which abode
In all things, (but it passed away) :

A presence mingling with the sky,
And earth and sea and all things fair :
A vision with no power to die:
A sense of rapture everywhere .

A voice whose lightest tones and least
May never reach these ears again,
Yet left me, when its music ceased,
A world of echoes in my brain.

XV.

THE MOUNTAINS.

These lonely mountains ! how they steal
The torture from my sorrow's core—
A place to close mine eyes and feel
This life of passion throb no more.

If only, as I silent lay
The bitter doubts which vex my brain
Would roll like mists and melt away,
And Love, without the clouds, remain.

The memory of those gracious days,
Which you and I in Eden spent,
Would soften all Death's perilous ways,
And give me light, where'er I went.

Nay, to my musing heart would Death
Full of compassionate comfort seem,
A voice of hope, a gentle breath
To waft me on from dream to dream.

XVI.

THE DREAM.

I thought that all these things came true,
And in this lonesome gorge I lay,
Pallid and dead for love of you,
'Mid wild-shaped rocks and boulders gray.

And in my dream you came and knelt,
And told me much and whispered low
About the places where we dwelt,
The things we did such years ago.

But I believed not in my mind,
Thinking 'mid all those boulders gray,
Some bush but trembled in the wind,
Though lifeless and as cold as they.

Then once again, behold you came

And stood, and rent your robes, and cried,
And called me by my household name,
And leagues of echoing cliffs replied.

But still I lay entranced and dumb,

Yet knew that all the hills were bare,
And thought your cry was : "Change hath come
And Waste and Winter everywhere.

"Summer is past, and brown and thin

Are all the woods where foliage waved.
The harvest-sheaves are gathered in
And garnered. How shall we be saved ?"

XVII.

MISWANDERED.

We saved? not I alone then lost?

Oh love, my love, if this same wo
The glory of your youth hath crossed
With equal blight, I did not know.

Have patience. I will rise and come
And my miswandered ways confess—
So far astray—so dark—so dumb—
And pray you to forgive and bless.

Though Winter's freezing storms begin,
And waste the fields where foliage waved—
Though all the wheat be gathered in,
Oh love, my love, we shall be saved!

XVIII.

LISTEN.

Oh dear for ever, loved and sought,
And hoped and yearned for—since this air
Seems with your fragrant presence fraught,
Listen, oh listen to my prayer.

Draw near me. Trust my heart to know
Your footstep from the rustling sheaves,
Your breath from all the winds that blow,
And all the voices of the leaves.

XIX.

WINTER GONE.

Once more your throbbing lips were pressed
 Hungered and thirsted for to mine ;
I felt your sweet face on my breast,
 Your loving arms my neck entwine.

I could not tell you of my fear,
 What I had thought nor where had been,
How Winter's dim approach was near,
 Nor of the lingering shades of green.

I only knew Love could not die,
 And Doubt was wrong, and Faith was deep,
And in my heart I wished that I
 Were some young child, that I might weep.

XX.

SIDE BY SIDE.

I dreamed that in the silent mould

Both of us, side by side, were laid—

Fearing no wrong. The bell was tolled.

The hymns were sung. The prayers were prayed.

And some one said 'twas meet that they

Who loved so wildly had found rest

Spirit with spirit—clay with clay—

Face laid by face—and breast by breast.

“Dear heart” I said, “sweet soul, divine,

So longed for—on your gentle brow

Where heavenly light was wont to shine,

Must there be always darkness now?”

“ Dear heart ”—again—“ sweet soul, divine,
Loved always—all the years that roll
Are ours for ever—yours and mine
To love in—clinging soul to soul.

“ Kiss me once more. If slumber fall
Upon us—fear not : be not loth
To sleep. The trumpet cannot call
One spirit without wakening both.”

L'ENVOI.

Desert so wild and gray—bare rocks—and wilderness
places,

Here O friends! let me stray, though far from the
sight of your faces.

Whence were those bitter wails, 'those cries which
awoke us from slumber,

Tears from the darkness of jails, and sorrows which
no man can number?

These from the victims of hate, from the outcast
sons of oppression,—

Vengeance—the creed of the State! and Law—the
fierce Right of Possession!

Lawgivers hard as the stone! have ye joy of the
wrecks ye are making?

Flesh and blood like your own, but hearts that
are broken and breaking!

Onward the light crowds tread; men are gay,
and the feaster carouses;

Poets still dream of the dead and embalm them
and build for them houses.

Therefore I trampled my lute in the dust, and in
silence I ponder;

Powerless to help, I am mute, and alone through
the wolds I would wander.

What shall I find in the wilderness gray, save the
dove and the swallow?

Shaken about by the wind, there are reeds for the
mouth, smooth and hollow.

Each to his task! Ye are strong for the strife
and ye never did fear it.

I shall return with a song. Remember my words
when ye hear it.

TRANSLATIONS.

TRANSLATIONS.

FROM KERNER.

THE RICHEST PRINCE.

'Twas at Worms, four German princes
Told their tales and made their boast,
Feasting in the royal palace,
Praising each his own realm most.

Spake the Prince of all the Saxons :
“Where’s the land like mine for worth?
Silver in its hills is hidden,
Heaps of treasure in its earth.”

“Where’s a land like mine for plenty?”

Spake the ruler of the Rhine,

“Golden harvests fill the valleys.

All the hills are rich with wine.”

Then spake Ludwig of Bavaria :

“In my realm is wealth as great ;

Spacious cities, sumptuous abbeys,

Castles built for pomp and state.”

Württemberg’s beloved monarch,

Bearded Eberhard then cried :

“In my realm are no great cities,

And its hills no treasure hide ;

“But one charm that land possesses :

I can lay my head to rest,

Wandering through each lonesome forest,

On my humblest subject’s breast.”

Then each Prince (Bavarian—Saxon—

And the Rhine-lord) shouted free :

“Bearded Count ! Your land grows jewels,

You are wealthier far than we !”

THE TWO TOMBS.

Two coffins are deeply buried
 'Neath the old cathedral stones :
The one holds proud King Ottmar,
 And the other a singer's bones.

The King once sat in splendour
 On a throne of old renown ;
The sword in his right hand glitters ;
 On his head is a golden crown.

Yet, near to the haughty monarch
 The gentle singer sleeps ;
And the harp he loved to waken
 Still in his hand he keeps.

The noise of battle thunders,
The war-cry shakes the land :
But the sword hath never trembled,
Which the King holds in his hand.

Flowers bloom ; and all the valleys
Are glad with murmuring gales :
And the singer's harp is trembling
With a song which never fails.

THE OLD HOME.

Once in a shady glen
Asleep I lay and dreaming :
I saw my home again
With glory round it gleaming.

In morning's ruddy light
Shone forth my father's dwelling.
Oh how the heavens were bright !
The cornfields fair past telling !

Garden where roses grew—
How glad my heart to find it !
But soon the vision flew,
And left such pain behind it.

Now through dark lands I roam.

I yearn, awake and sleeping.

Always I seek that home,

And find it not for weeping.

FROM LENAU.

THE POSTILLION.

Lovely was the night in May ;
All Spring's joys seemed blended
In the woods and moors which lay
'Neath warm skies extended.

All the land was hushed in night,
Every road forsaken ;
Nothing but the Moon's clear light
In the streets did waken.

Not a murmur save the breeze,
Its delight expressing,
Breathing on the fields and trees
Springtime's cheer and blessing.

Soft and still the brooklet crept,
In the moonlight gleaming,
Not to wake the flowers which slept
From their blissful dreaming.

My postillion driving fast,
Blithe and jovial-hearted,
Blew a merry bugle-blast
Till the echoes started.

Four fine steeds he smartly drove,
Loud their hoofs resounding,
On by meadow, hill, and grove,
And broad vales surrounding.

Just a glimpse, and out of view
Fields and farms past number,
And small hamlets, not a few,
Wrapped in dreams and slumber.

Lo, in sight a churchyard stood,
 (Shadows dark did fold it)
Built where every passer could
 In its place behold it.

Leaning on the mountain side
 Stretched the gray wall grimly,
And the cross of Him who died
 Towered in moonlight dimly.

My postillion stopped the chaise
 In that place so lonely,
Fixed a long and earnest gaze
 On the churchyard only :

“Here must wheels and horses rest,
 (Sir, with your complying)
Yonder in the earth’s cool breast,
 Is my comrade lying.

“Such a friend, so bold and true,
 Brisk and gay and clever !
None like him the bugle blew,
 Till he ceased for ever.

“Here I always stop to send,
With true brother-greetings,
Music to remind my friend
Of our happy meetings.”

Then a travelling song he gave
On his horn completely,
Which his brother in the grave
Played in old times sweetly.

And the hills re-echoed clear
Every note so truly,
Just as if his friend could hear,
And was answering duly.

On we flew past vale and hill,
Loose our bridles flinging,
But those mountain-echoes still
In my ears are ringing.

FROM HEINE.

I.

Nacht lag auf meinen Augen.

Night lay upon my eyelids ;
My mouth was closed with lead ;
I lay in the deep graveyard—
Wounds in my breast and head.

How long it was, I know not,
That I had lain in sleep ;
I woke and heard a knocking
At my grave's door so deep.

“Wilt thou not get up, Henry?
Day breaks, and night is done.
The dead are all now risen—
The endless joy begun.”

I cannot rise, my darling ;
Sight from my eyes hath fled,
They are indeed quite blinded
By all the tears they shed.

“I kiss thy blind eyes, Henry ;
I kiss the night away.
Thou still shalt see the angels,
And Heaven’s eternal day.”

I cannot rise, my darling ;
My heart bleeds more and more,
Where once thy own words pierced it ;
The wound is sharp and sore.

“I lay so gently, Henry,
I lay my hand thereon ;
Thy heart shall bleed no longer ;
The wound is healed and gone.”

I cannot rise, my darling ;
Blood still flows from my head ;
'Twas there I aimed the weapon
When thy farewells were said.

“I bind thy head up, Henry ;
I bind it with my hair ;
I will staunch all the bleeding,
And leave no aching there.”

So tenderly she pleaded,
She begged, she prayed me so,
I could resist no longer,
But must to the loved one go.

Then, like a bursting torrent,
My wounds broke forth again
From bleeding breast and forehead,
And woke me with the pain.

II.

Aus meinen Thränen spriessen.

From the tears my eyes are shedding,
Flowers of sweet odour spring,
And my sighs are changed to music
For nightingales to sing.

And to thee, if thou lov'st me, maiden,
Shall all these flowers belong,
And ever before thy window
Shall nightingales make song.

III.

Du bist wie eine Blume.

Like some fair flower thou seemest,
So good, so sweet thou art ;
I gazed till a strange feeling
Of sadness filled my heart ;

Methought my hands in blessing
On thy fair head were laid,
And "May God always keep thee
So sweet, so pure," I prayed.

IV.

Sie haben heut' Abend Gesellschaft.

There are guests at the house this evening ;
They are gay with dance and song ;
And above at the shining window
A shadow flits along.

Thou seest me not ; in darkness
So friendless I stand below ;
Still less can'st thou see the passions
Which in my dark heart flow.

My heart, my dark heart, loves thee—
Uncared for and forgot—
It bleeds and breaks and loves thee,
And yet thou seest it not !

FROM EICHENDORFF.

In einem kühlen Grunde.

Cool flows the rushing water.

The mill-wheel turns apace.

The miller's fair young daughter

Has vanished from the place.

She gave a ring for token

How true her heart would be :

The ring in twain fell broken

When she turned false to me.

I fain would wander gaily
 With minstrel folk that roam,
And sing my own songs daily
 In strange lands far from home.

I fain would join the tramping
 Of soldiers armed for fight,
And heap the watchfires, camping
 On battlefields by night.

I hear the mill-wheel rolling.
 I know not what I need.
Would my death-bell were tolling !
 Then it would stop indeed.

FROM UHLAND.

*Es zogen drei Burschen wohl über den
Rhein.*

Over the Rhine came travellers three,
They were riding apace to the hostelry.

“Good hostess! have you sweet ale and wine?
And where is your daughter so fair and fine?”

“My ale and my wine are fresh and clear,
My daughter is laid on a wooden death-bier.”

When into the chamber they came and stood,
The daughter lay there in a coffin of wood.

The first—the veil from her face he took ;
And he gazed at her long with a pitiful look :

“Were you only alive with that sad sweet brow,
I would love you the rest of my days from now !”

The second—he covered the face once more,
And he wept aloud as he turned to the door :

“Oh why do you lie on that hard death-bier?
I have loved you for many and many a year.”

The third—he lifted again the veil,
And kissed her close on the mouth so pale :

“I always loved you. I love you still.
I will love you for ever and ever, I will !”

FROM WILHELM MÜLLER.



Am Brunnen vor dem Thore.

A little brook—a door-porch—
And a linden-tree between,
Where dreaming in its shadow
My happiest hours have been.
I marked its rind in boyhood,
With loving names and true,
And both in joy and sorrow
To its cool shade I drew.

I was compelled to wander
 One day in darkness deep,
And in the gloom and shadow
 I closed my eyes to sleep.
Again its branches whispered ;
 Again they called to me :
“Come back, old friend and comrade !
 Here all thy rest should be.”

The cold winds blew about me ;
 My head and face were bare ;
The way was far to travel ;
 No shelter found I there.
Now many a league divides me
 From that old linden-tree,
But still its branches whisper :
 “Here all thy rest should be.”

FROM FREILIGRATH.

O lieb' so lange du lieben kannst.

Oh love as long as e'er thou canst,
Oh love as long as e'er thou mayst,
The hour shall come, the hour shall come,
When friends are in the graveyard placed.

And let love ever rule thy mind,
And draw thee with its power divine,
As long as e'er one other heart
Beats in warm sympathy with thine.

And love him changelessly and true,
Who e'er his breast to thee shall show,
And make him happy all his days,
Nor grieve him when he loves thee so.

And ever guard thy hasty words ;
Thou canst not call them back again ;
God knows thou didst not wish him wrong,
And yet they gave thy comrade pain.

Oh love as long as e'er thou canst,
Oh love as long as e'er thou mayst,
The hour shall come, the hour shall come,
When friends are in the graveyard placed.

Then kneel'st thou down beside the vault,
And hid'st thy wet eyes, weeping sore,
There in the long damp churchyard grass ;
(Those eyes shall never see him more).

And criest : " Oh look upon me now,
Here weeping thy dark grave above,
God knows I never wished thee wrong,
Forgive me that I grieved thy love."

He hears thee not, nor sees, nor comes,
That thou upon his neck may'st fall,
The lips, which kissed thee once so much,
Reply not: "I forgave thee all."

He long ago forgave thee all,
But many a burning teardrop fell
About thee, and thy bitter word,
But hush! He rests, and all is well.

Oh love as long as e'er thou canst,
Oh love as long as e'er thou mayst,
The hour shall come, the hour shall come,
When friends are in the graveyard placed.

FROM
THE IDYLS OF MOSCHUS,
THE SICILIAN.

FROM THE EPITAPH ON
BION, A LOVING HERDSMAN.

Help me, Sicilian Muses, a dirge of sorrow is
needed.

Nightingales making lament in the thick-covered
trees of the forest,

Tell the Sicilian fountain, the fountain of famed
Arethusa,

Bion the shepherd is dead, the singer, the bard,
the musician ;

Harmony ceases with him, and the Dorian measure
is ended.

Help me, Sicilian Muses, a dirge of sorrow is
needed.

Never again shall he play to his flocks, our ever-
beloved one ;

Lonely the oak-trees stand, for he sings no longer
beneath them ;

Only in Pluto's house he chants the song of
oblivion.

Now not a sound in the hills is heard, but beneath
in the valleys, 10

Wander the bellowing oxen astray, and neglecting
the pasture.

Help me, Sicilian Muses, a dirge of sorrow is
needed.

Bion, Apollo himself for thy sudden destruction
lamented ;

Satyrs and fauns made moan and the black-robed
gods, the Priapi ;

Echo, that dwells in the dells and the rocks
 lamenting thy silence,
Mimics no longer thy lips,¹ and the flourishing trees
 of the orchard
Wasted their fruit at thy death; and the flowers
 of the forest are faded.

Help me, Sicilian Muses, a dirge of sorrow is
 needed.

Who shall now play on thy pipe, dear shepherd,
 our ever-beloved one?

Who is so bold as to put his mouth to the reeds
 thou hast handled,—

20

Breathing the melody still of thy lips in their
 innermost chambers?

Echo too feeds in the reeds on thy lost song's
 tremulous music.²

See, 'tis to Pan himself that I offer thy pipe; when
 he takes it,

Let him beware of its touch, lest he fail, though
 a god, to surpass thee.

Help me, Sicilian Muses, a dirge of sorrow is
 needed.

Fair Galatea too weeps for thy song, whom once
thou delighted'st,

Seated entranced at thy side by the sandy shores
of the ocean.

Not like the Cyclops' voice was thine ; him fair
Galatea

Loathed, but she beckoned to thee from her home
in the foam of the sea-caves.

Now forsaking the deep, she sits on the desolate
sandbanks, 30

Sits in disconsolate mood, or gathers thy herds to
the feeding.

Help me, Sicilian Muses, a dirge of sorrow is
needed.

Herdsmen, the Muses no more shall bestow any
gifts upon mortals.

And with a bitter wail at thy tomb the Loves are
lamenting.

This is a second sorrow for thee, most tuneful of
rivers !³

Meles ! another grief is thine ; *one* perished afore-
time,

That sweet mouth of the Muse (of Calliope), Homer
Aoidos.

Then for thy beautiful son, they say that thy
waters lamented,

Filling the whole wide sea with thy voice and
the sound of thy sorrow.

Now for another son is thy murmur so sad in the
twilight. 40

Both to the fountains were dear; the fount Pegasean
loved Homer;

Bion appeased his thirst at the waters of sweet
Arethusa.

Homer sang of the fame of Tyndarus' ill-starred
daughter:

Atreus' son, Menelaus: Achilles, the offspring of
Thetis.

Never of war nor of tears was our Bion's song,
but of sheepfolds,

Telling in clear-toned strains of the labours of Pan
and of herdsmen,

Milking the kine as he sang, and making the
reeds for his music.

Yes, and he sang too of love, troth-plight and the
tender embraces,
Nursing desire in the bosom of youth and appeased
Aphrodite.

Help me, Sicilian Muses, a dirge of sorrow is
needed. 50

Bion, this famous city, indeed all cities bewail
thee :

Ascra, resounding the fame of her Hesiod, Ascra
deplores thee :

Yes, and Bœotian forests lament for thee more
than for Pindar :

Lesbos, the pleasant isle, was not so sad for
Alcæus :

Nor doth the Teian city⁴ weep less for thee than
her own bard :

Paros regrets thee more than Archilochus : ev'n
Mitylene

Mingles her tears for thy death with her grief for
the silence of Sappho.

All our pastoral singers, clear-voiced, the friends
of the Muses,

Weep for thy death : Sicelidas mourns, the glory
of Samos :

Lycidas too sheds tears as he sings among the
Cydonians, 60

(Lycidas, fair to behold and of joyous face)⁵, and
Philetas

Weeps in the island of Cos by the banks of the
murmuring Halens.

Here in Syracuse, mourning thy fate, Theocritus
sorrows ;

I too join his lament and I sing in Ausonian
measure

This sad dirge for thy death—I who learned from
thy lips in the old time

Those sweet pastoral strains thou wast wont to
teach thy disciples,—

Honoured by thee, since heirs of the Dorian Muse
thou hast made us ;

Others may take thy wealth, but to me thy song
thou bequeatest.

Help me, Sicilian Muses, a dirge of sorrow is
needed.

Woe is me ! in the gardens the flourishing mallows
have faded,— 70

Withered the soft curling anise and verdant bloom
of the parsley ;—

Yet shall they all revive in another year, when
the Spring comes.⁶

We who are great and strong and wise, when
death hath destroyed us,

Deep in the hollow earth must lie, never hearing
the least sound,

Sleeping a long long sleep without end, from which
none shall awake us.

Thou shalt remain in the earth for ever and ever
in silence !

Yet doth the croaking frog live on,⁷ for the
Nymphs have decreed it.

Little I envy such lives and their voices are harsh
and discordant.

Help me, Sicilian Muses, a dirge of sorrow is
needed.

Bion, the poison entered thy mouth.⁸ Thou
* drankest the poison. 80

How could it touch thy lips and fail to grow
sweetened and harmless?

Where could a mortal be found to give thee the
cup,⁹ when thou bad'st it?

Ruthless and hard of heart! but he hated song
and the minstrels.

Help me, Sicilian Muses! a dirge of sorrow is
needed.

Justice hath reached them all. But none the less
is my sorrow.

Would that the power were mine to enter the
gates of Avernus,

As did Alcides of old, as Orpheus did, and Odysseus!
Then for thy sake forthwith would I speed to the
mansions of Hades,

Eager to see for myself if thou sing'st in the
hearing of Pluto—

O but to learn that song! But I charge thee,
sing only to Kora

90

Some soft pastoral strain, some plaintive Sicilian
measure.

She too played upon Etnean shores. She herself
is Sicilian.¹⁰

Loving the Dorian song, she will not fail to reward
thee.

And as Eurydice once she released for the singing
of Orpheus,

So may she send thee, O Bion, again to these
mountains and valleys,

Pleased with thy lyre! but had I such skill to
delight with my music,

Even in Pluto's house¹¹ I would sing myself to
redeem thee.

NOTES TO MOSCHUS.

1. *Echo mimics no longer thy lips.*

CF. SHELLEY :

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay
Since she can mimic not his lips.

ADONAI8.

2. *Echo too feeds in the reeds on thy lost song's tremulous music.*

CF. SHELLEY :

Death feeds on his mute voice.

ADONAI8.

3. *This is a second sorrow for thee, most tuneful of rivers !*

CF. SHELLEY :

Most musical of mourners, weep anew.

ADONAI8.

4. *Nor doth the Teian city, &c.*

In Teos I saw a likeness of Anacreon, pre-eminent, if ever man was, among bards of old.

THEOCRITUS. EPIGRAMS.

According to some readings it should be the "Ceian" city, when Simonides would be the bard referred to, but as Cos or Ceos is mentioned later in the idyl, (in the list of contemporary poet-mourners) the other reading has the advantage of variety.

5. *Lycidas fair to behold and of joyous face.*

A favourite with the Muses, a man of Cydon, whose name was Lycidas and laughter played upon his lip.

THEOCRITUS. IDYL VII.

6. *Yet shall they all revive in another year, &c.*

CF. SHELLEY:

Ah woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year.

ADONAI8.

7. *Yet doth the croaking frog live on.*

Compare a similar idea in SHAKSPERE:

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,
And thou no breath at all?

KING LEAR.

And in SHELLEY:

and many worms
And beasts and men live on.

ALASTOR.

8. *Bion, the poison entered thy mouth.*

CF. SHELLEY:

Our Adonais has drunk poison.

ADONAI8.

9. *Where could a mortal be found to give thee the cup, &c.*

CF. SHELLEY :

What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?

ADONAIS.

10. *She herself is Sicilian, &c.*

CF. MATTHEW ARNOLD :

But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute would go,
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate ;
And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
And relax Pluto's brow,
And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
Of Proserpine, among whose crowned hair
Are flowers first open'd on Sicilian air,
And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

O easy access to the hearer's grace
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!
For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
Each rose with blushing face ;
She loved the Dorian Pipe, the Dorian strain.

THYRSIS.

11. *Even in Pluto's house I would sing myself*

CF. W. SAVAGE LANDOR :

Plutonas ædes adirem
Et canerem Stygias ad undas.

AD LIBERTATEM.

FROM
THE IDYLS OF BION,
THE SYMRNÆAN.

FROM THE EPITAPH ON ADONIS.

'Tis for Adonis I wail. He is dead, the beauteous
Adonis.

Dead is the lovely Adonis ; the Loves have joined
the lamenting.

Sleep no more in thy beautiful robes, thou fair
Aphrodite !

Walk in the garment of tears, and beating thy
hand on thy bosom,

Cry unto all : "He is dead ; he is dead, the lovely
Adonis."

'Tis for Adonis I wail. The Loves have joined
the lamenting.

Dead on the mountains he lies to the grief of fair
Aphrodite.

Wounded in his white thigh by a boar's white
tusk was Adonis.

Hardly he draws his breath, and the black blood
pours in a torrent

Over his snow-white flesh, and his bright eyes under
his eyelids

10

Darkened are grown and dim, and the red from
his lips hath departed,

Leaving no trace of the kiss which the Cyprian
will not relinquish.

Ev'n when he lived no more, to kiss him pleased
Aphrodite.

Ah, but Adonis died not knowing the lips which
had kissed him !

Woe is me, Cytherea ! the lovely Adonis hath
perished.

When she perceived and saw the incurable wound
of Adonis

When she beheld the blood, she stretched forth
her arms to embrace him,

Crying in doleful voice: "O stay, my unhappy
Adonis!

Stay till I reach thee¹ for this last time and clasp
thee, Adonis!

Kissing thee lip to lip and folding thee close for
a moment. 20

Waken a little while. Give me one last kiss, my
Adonis.

Deep would I drain thy love; and this parting
kiss would I cherish

As 'twere Adonis himself;² since I know thou
preparest to leave me.

Far is thy flight; thou must go to the mansions
of Hades, Adonis,

Unto the dismal and ruthless king—but I am a
goddess.

Needs must I live, alas! and remain to my sorrow
behind thee.³

Take, Persephone, this my spouse ! Thou art stronger
than I am,

Stronger by far, and to thee must descend all
things that are lovely.⁴

Joy of my heart, thou art gone ! my desire like
a vision hath vanished.

Love is for ever fled. Oh why in thy youth and
thy beauty

30

Would'st thou so madly contend with the tameless
boars of the desert ?"⁵

Thus did the Cyprian wail, and the Loves all
joined the lamenting.

Woe is me, Cytherea ! the lovely Adonis hath
perished.

Fast flow the Paphian's tears, as fast as the blood
from Adonis.

All as it falls on the ground is transformed into
blossom and fragrance.

Roses arise from the blood;⁶ from the tears springs
the bloom of the wind-rose.

'Tis for Adonis I mourn. He is dead, the lovely
Adonis.

Weep no longer, O Cypris. Lament him no more
in the forest.

Fair is his bed in the glades. Soft leaves are
strown for Adonis.

He hath a couch, Cytherea. Thy couch hath the
lifeless Adonis. 40

Ev'n though dead he is fair. He is lovely in
death, as though sleeping.

Robed in a garment of purple he lies, the tender
Adonis.

Round him the weeping Loves utter wails in the
glades of the woodland.

Shorn are their locks for Adonis,⁷ and one on his
arrows was trampling,

One on his bow,⁸ and another his well-winged
quiver hath emptied.

One hath Adonis' sandal unbound ; one is carrying
water

Cool in a caldron of gold, while his limbs⁹ another
is bathing.

One with the waft of his wings is fanning the
brows of Adonis.¹⁰

Now 'tis for Cypris herself that the Loves have
raised their lamenting.

Hymen at every door hath extinguished the flame
of thê torches, 50

Wasting the bridal wreath, and no longer the song
of rejoicing

Hymen ! Hymen ! is heard ; but *Alas !* is the dirge
they are chanting.

Now do the Graces weep for the death of Kinyras'
offspring.

One to another they sing : " He is dead, the lovely
Adonis ! "

Now do the Muses themselves commence their
dirge for Adonis—

Seeking to charm him back into life by their song,
but he hears not.

(Fain would he hear if he could, but Kora is loth
to release him).

NOTES TO BION.

1. *Stay till I reach thee, &c.*

CF. SHELLEY:

Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live.

ADONAIIS.

2. *this parting kiss . . . as 'twere Adonis himself.*

CF. SHELLEY:

that kiss shall all thoughts else survive . . .
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais!

ADONAIIS.

3. *Needs must I live, &c.*

CF. SHELLEY:

But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart.

ADONAIIS.

4. *and to thee must descend all things that are lovely.*

CF. SHELLEY :

For he is gone where all things wise and fair
Descend.

ADONAIS.

5. *Oh why in thy youth and thy beauty, &c.*

CF. SHELLEY :

O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert, .
Why did'st thou leave the trodden paths of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart,
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den ?

ADONAIS.

6. *Roses arise from the blood, etc.*

CF. SHELLEY :

Whose sacred blood like the young tears of May
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

ADONAIS.

7. *Shorn are their locks for Adonis.*

CF. SHELLEY :

Another clipt her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem ;

ADONAIS.

8. *and one on his arrows was trampling,
One on his bow, etc.*

CF. SHELLEY :

Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and winged reeds.

ADONAIS.

9. *while his limbs another is bathing.*

CF. SHELLEY:

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs, as if embalming them.

ADONAIS.

10. *One with the waft of his wings is fanning the brows of Adonis.*

CF. SHELLEY:

And one with trembling hand clasps his cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight wings.

ADONAIS.

Compare also the following passage in Keats:—

Hard by,
Stood serene Cupids watching silently.
One, kneeling to the lyre, touched the strings,
Muffling to death the pathos with his wings;
And, ever and anon, uprose to look
At the youth's slumber; while another took
A willow bough, distilling odorous dew,
And shook it on his hair; another flew
In through the woven roof, and flutteringwise
Rain'd violets upon his sleeping eyes.

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